

## DEOMI NEWS LINKS 30 JULY 2021

### HIGHLIGHTS

[62 percent of Americans favor affirmative action programs: Gallup](#) [Celine Castronuovo, *The Hill*, 30 July 2021]

*Roughly 62 percent of American adults in a [new Gallup poll](#) released Friday support affirmative action programs for minority groups, the highest level of support recorded for such policies over the past 20 years. The support is up from the 54 percent who indicated support for affirmative action in 2016 and the 61 percent in 2018. In 2001, when Gallup first measured support for policies that promote representation for traditionally underrepresented groups, about 47 percent of survey respondents backed the measures. The Friday survey found that 44 percent of respondents do not think Black Americans have as many opportunities as White Americans to get any job for which they are qualified, the highest since Gallup first began conducting readings on racial disparities in job searches in 1963. The study comes as affirmative action has become a widely debated topic in recent years, especially in connection to education programs at the university level.*

[Army commemorates 60th anniversary of Armed Forces Integration](#) [Col. Jonathan Dahms, *U.S. Army News Service*, 24 July 2021]

*“Sixty years ago, President Truman set a non-negotiable standard for our nation’s military, ‘...there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons,’ ” said Secretary of the Army Pete Geren. “On the 60th anniversary of that courageous act, we celebrate our Army’s commitment to fulfilling President Truman’s order and Dr. King’s dream, an Army where men and women are judged by the content of their character not the color of their skin—Where the only colors that matter are red, white and blue.” The integration of the armed forces did more than just provide opportunity for African-American Soldiers, it opened the door of opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds. “We are not the greatest Army in the world because we are White or Black, but because we reflect the faces of our society,” said Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth Preston. “You learn early on that people can either be successful or not based on their abilities, willingness to make personal sacrifices and their commitment to the team.”*

[Senate confirms Shawn Skelly and Gina Ortiz Jones in historic LGBTQ firsts](#) [Jo Yurcaba, *NBC News*, 23 July 2021]

*The Senate confirmed two LGBTQ women to top military positions on Thursday in historic firsts. Gina Ortiz Jones will serve as undersecretary of the Air Force—the first out lesbian to serve as undersecretary of a military branch. Shawn Skelly will serve as assistant secretary of defense for readiness, becoming the first transgender person to hold the post and the highest-ranking out trans defense official in U.S. history. Skelly is also the second trans person confirmed by the Senate, behind Rachel Levine, the assistant secretary to the Department of Health and Human Services. Ruben Gonzales, executive director of the LGBTQ Victory Institute, said lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer inclusion is about more than representation—it will impact policies and legislation. “Gina and Shawn will join at least a dozen other out Defense Department appointees who understand the challenges LGBTQ servicemembers face and will make their well-being a*

priority,” Gonzales said. “Our military, like our government, is strongest when it reflects the diversity of the people it serves and ensures all are treated with dignity and respect.”

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## CULTURE

[1st Asian American Sports Illustrated curve model on fatphobia, quieting bullies](#) [Victoria Namkung, *NBC News*, 28 July 2021]

*In middle school, 5-foot-11-inch Yumi Nu would walk down the hall as boys bullied her by calling her “Godzilla” and “Yao Ming.” Last week, the 24-year-old Japanese and Dutch model and singer-songwriter made history as the first Asian American curve model to appear in the Sports Illustrated Swimsuit issue—a feat her younger self never could have fathomed. “Growing up, I didn’t have someone that looked like me,” Nu told NBC Asian America. “Being able to fulfill this representation role for other people who see me as a role model and to also fulfill that for myself has been super healing.” Nu said when she did see Asian American women in the media, there was no diversity in terms of size. “As Asian Americans, we have this dichotomy of the pressure of Asian culture and what it wants us to be and then American culture, so to have these conversations with fellow people in the same boat has been really nice for me,” Nu said. “I think a lot of Asian women can relate to our elders talking about weight and body,” she said. “There’s a lot of shame like, ‘Cover up,’ and, ‘Don’t eat so much,’ but also, ‘Don’t waste food.’” Nu said comments made within the community are often cloaked in concerns about health, but she believes fatphobia is part of patriarchal Asian cultures.*

[An Army vet was told she never served. Her viral response was the ultimate mic drop](#) [Haley Britzky, *Task & Purpose*, 23 July 2021]

*An Army veteran named Emery recently provided a case study in how female veterans online should respond to sexist trolls who make assumptions about their service. On July 16, the streamer and model who previously served with the 82nd Airborne Division and goes by EmeryEXP online was getting criticized by a YouTuber who was up in arms over a comment she made that “full time content creation is more exhausting” than the military some days. “I was there,” he tweeted. “You girls [were] always ... told to step aside ‘we got it’ and 90% had no problem with that let it happen.” When Emery saw what the man was saying about her, she knew he was “making an assumption” about her service because she’s a woman. “I may not be a super soldier,” she said. “But I felt like it would make enough of a statement to be like, ‘This is what you’re thinking in your head, and here’s a photo of me in my dress blues. Is that what you imagined? No. Okay, maybe you should think things through before you speak.’” Ultimately, Emery said there is “a massive amount of veterans who are so supportive of their sisters, but they’re just usually not the loudest ones on Twitter, so we kind of don’t see it a lot. And people forget that they do have a family out there.”*

[Black Rifle Coffee Distances Itself from Extremists, Including Some Who Loved Their Brand](#) [Oriana Pawlyk, *Military.com*, 25 July 2021]

*The founder and CEO of veteran-owned Black Rifle Coffee Company has received copious hate mail, social media backlash and disparaging phone calls in the wake of a [New York Times](#)*

[article](#) profiling the company, which paints itself as an organization not only serving up a basic cup of joe, but with an extra shot of patriotism delivered by military veterans. Hafer and his colleagues hoped the article, which ran July 14, would give them the opportunity to distance Black Rifle from right-wing fringe groups and individuals who've adopted its merchandise as their own. The piece would be the company's chance to denounce racism, hatred, bigotry and antisemitism from its brand once and for all, arguing that the vitriol never aligned with the firm's mission. That backfired. Instead, pundits and trolls alike immediately took Black Rifle's latest message to mean it was shutting out all conservative voices, something Hafer says has been unreasonably conflated.

[Gilgamesh tablet: U.S. authorities take ownership of artefact](#) [BBC News, 28 July 2021]

A federal court in the U.S. has verified that a rare ancient artefact, known as the Gilgamesh Dream Tablet, was legally seized by authorities. The 3,500-year-old tablet, from what is now Iraq, bears text from the Epic of Gilgamesh—one of the world's oldest works of literature. Officials say it was illegally imported before being purchased by the Christian-owned brand Hobby Lobby. The rare item was bought to be put on display at the Museum of the Bible. The Washington DC museum, chaired and funded by the craft retailer's evangelical president Steve Green, has been plagued by controversies involving its collection. Mr Green previously blamed his naivety for the errors involving item provenance and said he knew “little of the world of collecting” when he started to purchase antiquities. On Wednesday, Iraqi Culture Minister Hassan Nazim announced that the U.S. had agreed to return 17,000 looted artefacts, most of them dating back to the same era as the Gilgamesh Dream Tablet.

[GLIMPSES: Medalists' bouquets hold deeper meaning for Japan](#) [Stephen Wade, *The Associated Press*, 29 July 2021]

Of course, an Olympic medal has significance. But the bouquet of flowers that every medal winner is being handed at the Tokyo Olympics has deeper meaning. Much deeper. The sunflowers and all the other flowers in the bouquet were grown in the three northeastern Japanese prefectures that were devastated by the 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and the subsequent meltdown of three nuclear reactors. About 18,000 people died in the catastrophe that hit the prefectures of Iwate, Fukushima, and Miyagi. The recovery is still on-going from that day—March 11, 2011. In Fukushima, a nonprofit organization was set up to grow flowers, hoping to lift area spirits. Many of the blooms were raised on vacated agricultural land that was abandoned when fruit and vegetable sales plummeted from the area. In Miyagi, parents who lost children in the disaster planted sunflowers on the hill where their children sought refuge from the tsunami. The act of remembrance has also been told in a children's book. Iwate is known for producing gentians, a blue-indigo flower that is the same shade of color as that used in the Olympic and Paralympic emblems.

[Regents approve naming Iowa's football field for Duke Slater](#) [The Associated Press, 28 July 2021]

Slater, the trailblazing Black football player who was an All-American tackle a century ago, played in the NFL, and became a pioneering Chicago judge. The university's Board of Regents approved the name Duke Slater Field at Kinnick Stadium during its meeting in Cedar Falls on

Wednesday. The idea of honoring Slater at Iowa's stadium originated in the 1970s when university president Willard "Sandy" Boyd proposed naming the Hawkeyes' stadium Kinnick-Slater, in part to honor 1939 Heisman Trophy winner Nile Kinnick. Boyd's idea faced pushback from some fans and a committee opposed to having a joint name. As a compromise, the university named the stadium for Kinnick and a residence hall for Slater. The push to put Slater's name on the stadium was renewed following protests for racial justice across the nation and on campus in 2020. Supporters argued the compromise 50 years ago snubbed one of Iowa's greatest Black athletes and scholars.

[Review: "Pray Away" goes deep into the painful history of the church's anti-gay conversion therapy](#) [Mick LaSalle, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, 29 July 2021]

"Pray Away" is a wise and compassionate film about anti-gay conversion therapy as it's practiced and encouraged by the evangelical church. As a therapy, it's destructive and a disaster, and the documentary doesn't shy away from saying so. At the same time, "Pray Away" demonstrates an understanding of the warmth, welcome and fellowship that make church such a powerful and, to some degree, nurturing influence on people's lives. Thus, the movie's compassion is not limited to the therapy's victims but to its practitioners as well, some of whom are also victims. Like few things in life, the evangelical church offers to take people in with unconditional love and offer them friends and community, if only they will speak the truth about themselves. But there's a catch: If you're gay, the truth about yourself is precisely what you then must give up." "Pray Away" spans about 50 years of the church-led ex-gay movement, concentrating on a number of people who participated in the movement at a high level, only to turn against it. Though there are political elements here, to be sure, "Pray Away" has more the feeling of witnessing multiple spiritual journeys.

[\[OFFICIAL TRAILER\]](#)

[Sha'Carri Richardson, Alen Hadzic and our unending forgiveness for White male athletes](#)

[Andrew Lawrence, *The Guardian*, 26 July 2021] [COMMENTARY]

In seemingly less time than Sha'Carri Richardson's world-stopping, 100m triumph at the U.S. trials, the matter of her Olympic-disqualifying suspension for a positive marijuana test has transformed routine sports talk fodder into a full-blown ethical debate for a divided nation. Rather than stoke these flames, Richardson accepted responsibility and didn't much campaign to run in the Olympic 4x100m. And even though the event postdates her suspension, USA Track & Field argued that placing her on the team anyway would have been unfair to her American rivals who had competed fair and square. Going into these Games, few figured to be checking for Hadzic, the 29-year-old épée alternate on a U.S. team that was a longshot to win a medal. The notable exception: six female fencers who wrote to the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC) in May demanding for an Olympic ban for Hadzic, the prime focus of an investigation into multiple accusations of sexual assault. But despite formal reports from three women about Hadzic and 10 more testifying to a decade-long history of alleged sexual predation that includes an investigation that resulted in a six-month ban from Columbia University while he was a member of their team, the best SafeSport could do was temporarily suspend him for the month of June as their fact-finding continues.

[Statue of Black hero on Lewis & Clark trip toppled in Oregon](#) [*The Associated Press*, 28 July 2021]

*A statue in Portland, Oregon, commemorating York, an enslaved Black member of the Lewis and Clark expedition, has been toppled and damaged, officials said. A spokesperson with Portland Parks and Recreation told KOIN 6 News that the bust was torn from its pedestal and significantly damaged Tuesday night or early Wednesday. The bust mysteriously appeared in February on a pedestal in a park in southeast Portland where a statue of Harvey Scott, a conservative and longtime editor of The Oregonian who opposed women's suffrage, stood until it was torn down. It remains unclear who created or placed the bust of York. "Unfortunately, the numerous racist responses to the memorial of a Black man forced to participate in the Corps of Discovery Expedition have not been a surprise," Portland Parks and Recreation Director Adena Long said. "The latest act of vandalism is incredibly disappointing for me, and I'm sure the majority of Portlanders will miss seeing York at the top of Mt. Tabor."*

[VA Makes "Error" in Using Gender-Neutral Motto in Official Government Notice](#) [Patricia Kime, *Military.com*, 27 July 2021]

*No, the Department of Veterans Affairs has not officially changed its mission statement, despite publishing a gender-neutral version in an official U.S. government publication last week. Buried in a July 23 Federal Register notice on regulations about reporting veterans' medical and benefits debt to credit agencies is a statement that the VA's mission is to "care for those who shall have borne the battle and for their families and survivors." That is a variation of the department's official mission to support "President Abraham Lincoln's promise 'To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan.'" The VA's website clarifies the mission statement, saying the department is dedicated to "serving and honoring the men and women who are America's Veterans." But while momentum has grown since 2017 among advocates and some members of Congress to change the motto to that gender-neutral version to be more inclusive of female veterans and those who do not identify with a specific gender, no official change has been made, VA spokesman Randy Noller told Military.com last week. "This entry was made in error, and we are going back to the originating office to ensure the mistake is not repeated going forward," Noller said.*

["We're better than that": Austin speaks about "un-American" discrimination against Asians](#) [David Choi, *Stars and Stripes*, 28 July 2021]

*Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, speaking in Singapore on Tuesday, recognized discrimination against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States, but said that while the U.S. "doesn't always get it right," admitting its flaws is a unique characteristic of democracy. Delivering the Fullerton Lecture at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Austin also emphasized the importance of partnerships and transparency in the international community, namely countries in Southeast Asia. "We've seen some painful lapses, like the unacceptable and frankly un-American discrimination that some Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have endured in my country in recent months," Austin said. Reports of anti-Asian hate crime rose dramatically in major cities during the first quarter of this year compared to the same period in 2020, according to a study by the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University, San Bernardino.*

## DISCRIMINATION

[Designer who won't make same-sex wedding websites loses case](#) [James Anderson, *The Associated Press*, 28 July 2021]

*A U.S. appeals court has ruled against a web designer who didn't want to create wedding websites for same-sex couples and sued to challenge Colorado's anti-discrimination law, another twist in a series of court rulings nationwide about whether businesses denying services to LGBTQ people amounts to bias or freedom of speech. A three-judge panel of the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver on Monday denied Lorie Smith's attempt to overturn a lower court ruling throwing out her legal challenge. The Alliance Defending Freedom, which represents Smith, argued that the law forced her to violate her Christian beliefs. The high court decided the Colorado Civil Rights Commission had acted with anti-religious bias against Phillips after he refused to bake a cake for two men who were getting married. But it did not rule on the larger issue of whether a business can invoke religious objections to refuse service to LGBTQ people.*

[Discrimination Against Mothers Mars Hiring](#) [Sara Savat, *Futurity*, 26 July 2021]

*An impossible standard is at the root of gender inequalities in the workplace, according to two new studies on inflexibility and discrimination against mothers. Put simply: Working mothers are often expected to work like they don't have children and raise children as if they don't work. The research papers, published separately ([first](#), [second](#).) in *Demography*, demonstrate how inflexible schedules and biased hiring practices, combined with gendered cultural norms around breadwinning and caregiving, lead to discrimination against mothers and perpetuate existing gender inequalities in the workplace. The research also forewarns why mothers may face increased workplace discrimination post-pandemic, according to Patrick Ishizuka, assistant professor of sociology at Washington University in St. Louis. "The pandemic has further opened our eyes to the struggles that working parents face—particularly mothers," Ishizuka says. Previous research into employer discrimination against mothers in the hiring process has focused exclusively on college-educated women in professional and managerial occupations. Little was known about whether less educated mothers navigating the low-wage labor market experience similar disadvantages.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[How Much Discrimination Did Guardsmen Face from Civilian Employers During the Pandemic?](#) [Steve Beynon, *Military.com*, 26 July 2021]

*Despite concerns about companies growing weary of regularly losing employees to National Guard duty, guardsmen reported fewer cases of problems with their civilian employers during the pandemic than other recent years, according to data obtained by Military.com. The data comes from the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, or ESGR, a Defense Department program that tracks issues guardsmen have with employers, including retaliation for taking time off for military duty, which in some cases is a crime. In 2020, ESGR worked on 700 cases for Air and Army National Guard troops with employer issues, according to the data, a slight decrease from 2019 and 2018, which had 733 and 858 cases, respectively. The data for 2021 is incomplete.*

*ESGR has opened 366 cases so far, which is on track to be on par with previous non-pandemic years.*

[Johnson & Johnson marketed baby powder to Black women amid cancer concerns, lawsuit says](#) [Marina Pitofsky, *USA TODAY*, 28 July 2021]

*A lawsuit alleging that Johnson & Johnson marketed talcum-based baby powder to Black women amid concerns over the product and ovarian cancer risks was filed on Tuesday on behalf of the National Council of Negro Women. The lawsuit was filed by attorneys Ben Crump and Paul Napoli. The attorneys in a Tuesday press statement accused the company of “specific marketing of talcum-based baby powder to Black women, despite links to ovarian cancers.” The case cites multiple reports describing Johnson and Johnson’s “targeted marketing to Black women,” including a 2019 report from Reuters that found that, in 2008 and 2010, nearly half of the company’s spending on promotions for baby powder was “directed at overweight and minority women.” Scientific findings on the link between talc-based baby powder and ovarian cancer are mixed. Findings as far back as the 1970s have tied the product to ovarian cancer, according to the FDA.*

[Lawsuit: Professor with ADHD alleges discrimination](#) [The Associated Press, 26 July 2021]

*A Kansas State University professor with ADHD alleges in a lawsuit that he was discriminated against because of the condition, which can cause inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity. The [Wichita Eagle reports](#) that Sanjoy Das, an associate professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering, filed the lawsuit Friday in federal court. Das requested reasonable work accommodations as allowed under the Americans with Disabilities Act, but was denied, he alleged in court documents. He claimed the denial of accommodations and retaliation he experienced for complaining about discrimination led to a new anxiety disorder diagnosis and work-related stress. At one point, a department head did agree to grant one request for accommodation: reminders of upcoming meetings. However, the department head only did so occasionally. He is seeking more than \$75,000 in diminished earnings, personal suffering and injury and other damages. The Equal Opportunity Employment Commission, a federal agency that enforces laws against workplace discrimination, granted Das the right to sue in April.*

[Report: Hate crime laws lack uniformity across the U.S.](#) [Aaron Morrison, *The Associated Press*, 28 July 2021]

*More than half a century since they were modernized, hate crime laws in the U.S. are inconsistent and provide incomplete methods for addressing bias-motivated violence, according to a [new report](#) by advocates for better protections. The report, first shared with *The Associated Press* ahead of its Wednesday release, is a comprehensive national review of hate crime laws that shows gaps and variances in the laws. Due to the complexity of hate violence, certain statutes meant to protect racial minorities and marginalized groups are less effective, as a consequence of bias in the criminal justice system, the report says. The existing laws can even discourage hate crime victims from coming forward, advocates say in the report, which also cites widespread flaws in the collection and reporting of data. “We really think this is the first report to bring together a state-by-state analysis along so many dimensions ... with a focus on racial justice and criminal justice reform,” said Naomi Goldberg, LGBTQ program director for the Movement*

*Advancement Project, which authored the report in partnership with over 15 national civil rights groups.*

## **DIVERSITY**

[Altus AFB “Diversity and Inclusion” group targets education, discourse](#) [Staff Sgt. Cody Dowell, Altus Air Force Base Public Affairs, 29 July 2021]

*The Diversity and Inclusion Working Group at Altus Air Force Base was established in March 2020. Their vision is to lead safe, productive forums on disparities and biases that create lasting avenues of communication and education for all Air Force members. Ultimately, their goal is to raise awareness on issues that affect Airmen, and create a lasting forum for all Airmen that results in respectful discourse. “The most recent ‘push’ of D&I isn’t a new concept,” said Capt. Mohamed Dharas, 97th Operational Medical Readiness Squadron Bioenvironmental Engineering Flight commander and Altus AFB D&I Working Group manager. “D&I is important to ensure our military is operating on all cylinders. A room of 100 Capt. Dharas’ wouldn’t work well because there would be too many like-minded people. In order for our military to sustain its dominance, we need to make sure that there is a diverse group of people at the table where big decisions are made.” The group is also tasked with the planning of monthly special observances on base. One of the group’s active members, Airman 1st Class Amanda Edwards, 97th Logistics Readiness Squadron logistics planner, says that it is vital to understand the perspective of others, while in the armed forces. Edwards goes on to explain that through communication and education of one another’s background and culture allows for a more harmonious work environment. “Unfortunately, D&I seems to have a negative connotation in the workplace due to it being a ‘touchy subject.’ We desire to change that false narrative and educate those who wish to be involved,” Edwards explained.*

[Army leaders encourage women to fill STEM roles](#) [Thomas Brading, Army News Service, 26 July 2021]

*As the Army’s race for talent sprints on, investing in women to fill leadership roles in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM, is critical to mission readiness, leaders said Thursday during a webinar. Maj. Gen. Maria Barrett, head of the Army Network Enterprise Technology Command, believes the Army cannot leave any talent on the table. Like many of her female peers, Barrett said she has dedicated her career by not wanting others to focus on the fact she is a woman in the technology ranks, but rather on her merits as a Soldier. Instead of being viewed as women, “we put our heads down and strive to be the best signal officers, the best leaders we can be and in the end contribute to the team in a meaningful way,” she said. If the Army shows young women leadership possibilities in its STEM careers, they may see how attainable those opportunities are for them, said Nancy Kreidler, director of cybersecurity and information assurance for the Army deputy chief of staff, G-6. Kreidler, an Army civilian for nearly four decades, said she had even fewer women role models in her early days. The career public servant was usually “the only woman in the room,” she said, and was often passed for promotion because, as a woman, she was considered too aggressive.*



[Biden celebrates anniversary of Americans with Disabilities Act](#) [Alex Gangitano, *The Hill*, 26 July 2021]

*President Biden on Monday celebrated the 31st anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a sweeping civil rights law, and announced a new program to help Americans experiencing long-term COVID-19 symptoms and conditions. “For our nation, the ADA is more than a law as well, it’s a testament to our character as a people, our character as Americans,” Biden said in the Rose Garden. Biden, as a senator, was a co-sponsor of the legislation, which prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in various settings, including places of employment, schools, community living and transportation. He announced on Monday a new effort for Americans with long-term COVID-19 impacts, so symptoms of “long COVID-19” could qualify as a disability under the ADA. The guidance does not automatically qualify long COVID-19 as a disability but people experiencing long-term symptoms or conditions can get an “individualized assessment” to determine the condition “substantially limits a major life activity.”*

[\[PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION\]](#)

[Childhood adversity drives Airman’s passion for diversity & inclusion](#) [Staff Sgt. Jao Torey Johnson, *380th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs*, 28 July 2021]

*It was the heckling from other kids that truly cut Flavia the deepest. As a young Romanian girl in a new country where she barely spoke the local language, Flavia Carver learned early on that some negative preconceptions are picked up at a very young age, and she experienced how painful it is to be the object of others’ prejudices. Through the Diversity Immigrant Visa Program, Flavia’s family won the green card lottery that began their destination from Vălenii de Munte, Romania, to the United States and set her on a path riddled with barriers of adversity. “People labeled my family as different because of our accents, behaviors, and mannerisms and that led to me being outcast quite a bit growing up,” Carver said. “That experience built resiliency within me, and I became a dedicated person that fought hard for what I wanted and all that America had to offer.” In May 2021, Tech. Sgt. Flavia Carver deployed from Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, to Al Dhafra Air Base, UAE, where she serves as the Equal Opportunity director. As the EO director she processes complaints of unlawful discriminations, bullying, hazing and sexual harassment. “I’m fully aware of my personal biases and what led me to be the person I am today,” Carver said. “But I don’t let that seep into my investigation and reports.”*

[DEI Goals Make It Imperative to Understand Essential Job Skills](#) [Howard Risher, *Government Executive*, 23 July 2021]

*A recent episode of “60 Minutes” featured an eye-opening segment for anyone who works in Human Resources: “Recruiting for Talent on the Autism Spectrum.” The program focused on adults with autism who have been shut out by employers. Rather than “graduating to their parents’ sofa”, they are filling important roles and performing at high levels. The theme is especially important today because of the focus on diversity, equity and inclusion, and the difficulty employers are experiencing finding and attracting applicants with the skills needed for the future. In an interview, Kelly Grier, the Ernst & Young U.S. Chair and Managing Partner, described how the company has hired dozens of employees with autism to work in fields like artificial intelligence, blockchain technology, and cybersecurity. Her key point: “Make no*

*mistake about it, this is absolutely a business imperative, and it makes great sense from a business perspective.” Government should be a model employer on this point.*

[First openly transgender Olympians are competing in Tokyo](#) [Anne M. Peterson, *The Associated Press*, 26 July 2021]

*For Quinn, a midfielder for the Canadian women’s soccer team, the opening match of the Tokyo Games carried more emotional weight than their previous Olympic appearances. Quinn became the first openly transgender athlete to participate in the Olympics when they started on Wednesday night in Canada’s 1-1 draw with Japan in Sapporo. Quinn, who is nonbinary and uses they/them pronouns, posted their feelings on Instagram. “I feel proud seeing ‘Quinn’ up on the lineup and on my accreditation. I feel sad knowing there were Olympians before me unable to live their truth because of this world,” they wrote. “I feel optimistic for change. Change in legislature, Changes in rules, structures, and mindsets.” Quinn, who plays professionally for OL Reign in the National Women’s Soccer League, is not the only transgender athlete participating in the Tokyo Games. Probably the most visible is Laurel Hubbard, a transgender woman competing in weightlifting for New Zealand. Chelsea Wolfe, a transgender cyclist, is a reserve on the U.S. women’s BMX Freestyle team.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[How “Degree Discrimination” Can Affect Feds’ Pay](#) [Linda Kyzer, *Government Executive*, 27 July 2021]

*The topic of “degree discrimination” recently made headlines, but the reality is when it comes to compensation—particularly for government workers—having a degree makes a critical difference. According to the [results of the 2021 ClearanceJobs Compensation Report](#), the difference between a high school diploma and a bachelor’s degree was more than \$20,000. Respondents with a high school diploma only earned average compensation of \$77,884; respondents with a bachelor’s degree earned average compensation of \$101,921; and those who added to their education with a master’s degree earned average compensation of \$123,101. As the nation’s largest employer, the federal government has a key role in promoting diversity within its positions. A recently signed executive order is focused on advancing diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility within the federal government. It currently notes that colleges can provide a recruiting ground for diversity employment. The struggle for many minorities is getting their foot in the door, however, particularly when it comes to advanced degrees. That’s why some organizations focused on advancing the national security workforce are also focusing on advancing college opportunities for diverse candidates.*

[How Vermont was first to finish integrating women into Guard combat arms units](#) [Davis Winkie, *Army Times*, 28 July 2021]

*When then-Defense Secretary Ash Carter formally opened the door for women to join Army combat arms units beginning in 2016, he noted that the transition wouldn’t happen overnight. But the transition has proved more difficult for the National Guard than the active-duty force. Ultimately, it took more than five years before the gender integration process was complete for any one of the Guard’s 54 states and territories. In April of this year, Vermont became the first state authorized to directly recruit women into all of its combat arms units, signaling its*

*successful completion of the integration process, according to Wayne Hall, a National Guard Bureau spokesman. As of July, Vermont remains the only state with across-the-board authorization for women; other states and territories have only secured narrower authorizations specific to certain units. The primary challenge that the Guard has faced in fully opening its units to women has been the Army's "leaders first" approach to the process, explained Col. Dana Tourangeau, the state's personnel directorate chief. "This requirement mandated that each [company-sized unit] must first have [two] Female leaders" at the rank of sergeant or above assigned and formally qualified in the combat arms job before junior troops or new recruits could join the unit, Tourangeau told Army Times.*

[Sunee Lee becomes first Asian American woman to take gold in gymnastics all-around](#) [Sakshi Venkatraman. NBC News, 29 July 2021]

*With a gymnastics gold medal under her belt, Sunee "Sunee" Lee's name is already in the history books. But the 18-year-old has broken another barrier, becoming the first Asian American woman to win gold in the Olympics' all-around competition. After Simone Biles departed the competition Tuesday, fans turned to Lee. The highly anticipated all-around Thursday was close from the start, with Lee edging out Brazil's Rebeca Andrade in the third rotation and leading by only one-tenth of a point. The final round sealed Lee's victory with 57.433 points, 0.135 more than Andrade, who won silver. Lee, now the fifth consecutive U.S. gymnast to take gold in the all-around, became a social media favorite after a "TODAY" interview with the gymnast's father, John Lee, who said, "She goes to the gym and she practices but we don't have a beam here. So I couldn't afford a real beam, so I built her one." The beam is still in the family's backyard.*

## **EXTREMISM**

[Ex-cop who stormed US Capitol is jailed after buying 37 guns and posting that violence is better than peaceful protest](#) [Marshall Cohen, CNN, 28 July 2021]

*A Virginia police officer who was fired after storming the U.S. Capitol was jailed Wednesday by a federal judge because he ordered a large stockpile of guns and ammunition after his January arrest, and posted online in support of future political violence. Thomas Robertson, a retired Army Reservist who later worked for the Rocky Mount Police Department, was one of the first rioters charged by the Justice Department. He was released in January but re-arrested this month after investigators said they found a rifle and bomb-making material in his home, and also learned that he recently bought another 37 guns on the Internet. The decision from Judge Christopher Cooper means Robertson will stay behind bars until his case is resolved, which could take months or even drag into 2022. "There is probable cause to believe that Robertson committed a felony—willfully shipping or transporting firearms and ammunition despite being under felony indictment," Cooper wrote in a ruling, concluding that there was no way to protect the public without keeping Robertson in jail.*

[FDACS suspends licenses held by Floridians involved in Jan. 6 riots](#) [WTVL Digital News (Tallahassee, Fla.), 27 July 2021]

*Florida Ag. Commissioner Nikki Fried announced FDACS Division of Licensing is suspending 22 licenses held by individuals involved in the Jan. 6 U.S. Capitol insurrection. "The deeply*

*disturbing events that occurred at our nation’s Capitol on January sixth were sedition, treason, and domestic terrorism—and those individuals involved in the insurrection must be held accountable for attempting to subvert our democratic process,” said Fried. The FDACS Division of Licensing has the ability to immediately suspend a license if the licensee is charged with a felony or certain other disqualifying offenses. Once a judgment is rendered, if the sentence disqualifies, FDACS can revoke the license.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Inside a KKK murder plot: “Do you want him six feet under?”](#) [Jason Dearen, *The Associated Press*, 27 July 2021]

*Joseph Moore breathed heavily, his face slick with nervous sweat. He held a cellphone with a photo of a man splayed on the floor; the man appeared dead, his shirt torn apart and his pants wet. “KIGY, my brother,” Moore said to another man who drove up in a blue sedan. It was shorthand for “Klansman, I greet you.” Moore showed the photo to David “Sarge” Moran, who wore a camouflage-print baseball hat emblazoned with a Confederate flag patch and a metal cross. “Oh, shit. I love it,” Moran said. “Motherf---- pissed on himself. Good job.” It was 11:30 a.m. on March 19, 2015, and the klansmen were celebrating what they thought was a successful murder in Florida. But the FBI had gotten wind of the murder plot. A confidential informant had infiltrated the group, and his recordings provide a rare, detailed look at the inner workings of a modern klan cell and a domestic terrorism probe. The Associated Press has reconstructed the story of the failed murder plot.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Marine Corps boots lieutenant allegedly tied to White supremacists](#) [Jeff Schogol, *Task & Purpose*, 26 July 2021]

*Marine 2nd Lt. Felipe Maher, who was accused of having ties to White supremacists, has been kicked out of the Corps and received an other than honorable discharge, a Marine Corps spokesman said on Monday. “[Second] Lt. Maher was administratively separated on July 23, 2021 and no further action is pending,” said Capt. Sam Stephenson, a spokesman for Training and Education Command. “No additional information is releasable.” Maher was initially scheduled to go to court-martial last year after being charged with violating a lawful general order and making a false statement for allegedly advocating extremist doctrine and lying by claiming he never belonged to a White supremacist group. Maher was also accused of having a tattoo that was allegedly affiliated with extremists along with conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman and wrongfully trying to possess steroids. Separate from the Marine Corps investigation, Task & Purpose found that in December 2017, Maher posted a picture of himself on Facebook along with the caption “Gucci Goy.” The word “goy” is a Hebrew and Yiddish term that is typically used to describe non-Jews but White supremacists often jokingly use the word to refer to themselves.*

[Outlawed biker and street gang activity in the Army drops dramatically, internal data says](#) [Kyle Rempfer, *Army Times*, 26 July 2021]

*Outlawed motorcycle and street gang activity across the Army dropped by more than half in fiscal year 2020, a stark contrast to the year prior, [according to an internal assessment](#) by Army*

*Criminal Investigation Command, or CID. Only 93 individuals with an Army connection were identified last year as being linked to gang activity through either a law enforcement report or a criminal intelligence report, according to the annual assessment, which was obtained by Army Times through the Freedom of Information Act. CID analysts cautioned in the document that last year's precipitous drop could be attributed to limitations imposed by the coronavirus pandemic, such as curfews and the inability to gather in public without being noticed. The document also warned of intelligence gaps. Some local police, including in California, stopped entering individuals into gang databases due to lawsuits, and gangs have shifted to more secure social media and encryption, "leaving a blind spot for law enforcement detection of gang activities," the assessment reads. Regardless, the drop chronicled in 2020 is significant.*

[Yes, an Air Force Recruit with Ties to a Hate Group Is Out. But the Military's Extremism Problem Isn't Fixed.](#) [Konstantin Toropin, *Military.com*, 26 July 2021]

*The Air Force has kicked out a man who belonged to the White nationalist group Identity Evropa months after reporters uncovered his ties, a spokeswoman confirmed in an email to Military.com Monday. "Shawn McCaffrey is no longer serving in the U.S. Air Force," Air Force spokeswoman Ann Stefanek confirmed Monday in a statement. McCaffrey enlisted on Jan. 26, 2021, according to Stefanek. In April 2021, the Huffington Post reported that McCaffrey had deep ties to White nationalist and anti-Semitic leaders and groups. According to the report, McCaffrey belonged to Identity Evropa and hosted a podcast that featured guests who included White supremacist Richard Spencer and Andrew Anglin, the fugitive founder of the neo-Nazi message board, The Daily Stormer. "There has essentially been no screening process," Heidi Beirich, an expert on American and European extremist movements, told Military.com. A [Pentagon report from February](#) on screening recruits for extremism noted that "human analysts cannot effectively and efficiently search the Internet on the hundreds of thousands of people each year that undergo DOD background vetting." Both the Pentagon report and Beirich point out that there are civil liberty considerations involved, as well.*

## HUMAN RELATIONS

[Why we don't dole out many compliments—but should](#) [David Robson, *BBC News*, 27 July 2021]

*Giving compliments makes us anxious, but new research shows that praising people has huge benefits—for both parties. Unfortunately, our anxieties about the ways others may perceive our own words can prevent us from giving compliments ourselves. No one, after all, wants to come across as clumsy, patronising or fawning. Yet three new studies on the psychology of compliment giving and receiving suggest that our fears about the ways our praise will be received are completely unfounded. And by letting go of that awkwardness, we could all enjoy better relationships with our friends, family members and colleagues. It is only relatively recently that psychologists have paid much attention to our compliments, with the majority of early research examining their persuasive potential.*

[RESEARCH [1](#), [2](#), [3](#)]

[Young Workers Want Good Communication, Not Perks](#) [Eric Stann, *Futurity*, 23 July 2021]

*Some of today's young workers, those ages 21-34, place more value on having respectful communication in the workplace over trendy work perks, a [study](#) finds. "Leaders and managers are the ones who have the power to help foster that connection of meaningful work, determine what employee well-being means, and how to communicate that meaning in a respectful way to their employees," says Danielle LaGree, an assistant professor of strategic communication at Kansas State University, who earned her doctorate at the Missouri School of Journalism. LeGree and colleagues identified this shift in workplace values for young workers after surveying more than 1,000 full-time workers who represent 18 different career areas, including the service industry. The team analyzed how participants rated, on a 1 to 5 scale, how each of the following workplace culture aspects were representative of their current place of employment—respectful engagement, autonomous respect, occupational resilience, job satisfaction, employee loyalty and retention, and job engagement.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

## INTERNATIONAL

[Budapest Pride stands up for LGBT rights in Hungary](#) [BBC News, 25 July 2021]

*LGBT people and their supporters have marched through the capital city of Hungary to defend their rights. It comes as the government tries to limit discussion of homosexuality and transgender issues in schools. A law to limit teaching on the subject came into force this month, and Prime Minister Viktor Orban plans to back it up with a referendum. Many of Hungary's EU partners are furious, and the bloc has begun legal action that could affect EU funding for Hungary. Budapest holds this march every year, but the new law has given the 2021 event special importance. A spokesperson for Hatter, the country's leading LGBTQI rights association, told the BBC's Newshour programme that the law "encourages" and "legitimises being openly homophobic or transphobic". "That damage will remain with us for many years," Tamas Dombos said. The event's aim is to stand up for a diverse, open and inclusive society. Thousands of people are said to have joined the march, which crossed the city's Liberty Bridge over the Danube.*

[Canada's first Indigenous governor general is installed](#) [Paula Newton, CNN, 26 July 2021]

*Indigenous leader and advocate Mary Simon has been installed as Canada's governor general. Simon is the first Indigenous person to serve as the official representative of Queen Elizabeth II in Canada and commander-in-chief of the Canadian Armed Forces. It is a largely ceremonial role although the Queen must approve the appointment after seeking recommendations from the Canadian government. Simon will serve as the country's 30th governor general, replacing former Canadian astronaut Julie Payette who resigned from the position earlier this year after she was accused by current and former employees of creating a "toxic" workplace environment. As first reported by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) last year, current and former government employees accused Payette of creating a toxic workplace, harassing and bullying employees and reducing some employees to tears. The appointment comes at a controversial time in Canada as the country confronts its history of systemic abuse of Indigenous communities, including forced assimilation programs.*

[Canada looks to women to bolster trades amid post-pandemic labor shortage](#) [Julie Gordon, Reuters, 29 July 2021]

*A shortage of skilled workers is intensifying in Canada, potentially threatening the pace of the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and that has policymakers looking at a largely untapped market for new construction workers: Women. But attracting and retaining women in the skilled trades has long proven difficult, with tradeswomen and advocates citing challenges balancing childcare and on-site work, the stubborn sexism still ingrained in some workplaces, and a lack of opportunities for women to get a foot in the door. Vanessa Miller was a young single mom when she decided to scrap university for welding. She got her journey person ticket and became a rarity in Canada: a woman with her own welding rig, a truck kitted out with all the equipment needed to do big jobs. “Every time you go to a different job and nobody knows who you are, you have to prove yourself,” she said, speaking from her home in Regina, Saskatchewan. “It’s still difficult to break into the industry, it’s still very male dominated.”*

[German official sent home for racist slur at Olympics](#) [The Associated Press, 29 July 2021]

*A German cycling official has been suspended and will be sent home from the Tokyo Olympics after using a racist slur during the men’s time trial. German cycling federation sports director Patrick Moster had been overseeing the cycling squad at the Tokyo Games. He used the slur while urging German rider Nikias Arndt to catch up to riders from the African nations of Algeria and Eritrea during Wednesday’s time trial. It was heard on TV broadcasts and widely condemned in Germany. Moster later apologized and the German team initially indicated he would stay in Tokyo, but said Thursday he would be sent home. German Olympic committee president Alfons Hörmann said he considers Moster’s apology to be “sincere” but that he “breached the Olympic values.” Hörmann added that “fair play, respect and tolerance ... are non-negotiable” for the German team.*

[Ghana poised to vote on “worst anti-LGBTQ bill ever,” advocates warn](#) [Dan Avery, NBC News, 29 July 2021]

*Draft legislation in Ghana would make identifying as gay or even an ally to the LGBTQ community a second-degree felony punishable by five years in prison—with advocating for LGBTQ rights punishable by up to 10 years. Same-sex conduct is already a crime in the West African country, with violators facing a three-year sentence, but the new Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill seeks to criminalize identifying as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, pansexual, nonbinary, queer, an ally “or any other sexual or gender identity that is contrary to the binary categories of male and female,” according to a version of the [bill leaked online](#). Advocating for the rights of anyone in those categories—through speech, printed material, electronic media or other means—could result in an even steeper sentence of up to a decade in prison. The proposal, which was submitted to parliament last month, also explicitly bans same-sex marriage and adoption, LGBTQ-focused associations and gender-affirming surgery—“except where the procedure is intended to correct a biological anomaly including intersex.”*

[Gymnastics-Germans opt for full-body suits to promote freedom of choice](#) [Gabrielle Tétrault-Farber, Reuters, 26 July 2021]

*The German women's gymnastics team opted to wear full-body suits in qualifications at the Tokyo Olympics on Sunday in a move they said was designed to promote freedom of choice and encourage women to wear what makes them feel comfortable. The team, composed of Sarah Voss, Pauline Schaefer-Betz, Elisabeth Seitz and Kim Bui, competed in red and white unitards, which are combined leotards and leggings extending to the ankles. Voss said the team—which wore full-body suits at the European championships in April in a move aimed at countering the sexualisation of the sport—were keen for the trend to catch on. “We want to be a role model in any case, to make everybody have the courage to follow us,” Voss said. The Germans' decision to wear unitards earned them praise from fellow competitors in Tokyo.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[“I feel very empowered”: Diver Tom Daley discusses being openly gay after winning gold](#) [Emily Adams, *USA TODAY*, 26 July 2021]

*Tom Daley and his diving partner, Matty Lee, brought home a gold medal for Team Great Britain Monday on the synchronized 10-meter platform dive, and the victory was especially meaningful for Daley in his second Olympics as an openly gay man. Daley came out in a YouTube video in 2013 shortly after he began dating his now-husband, Dustin Lance Black. According to *Outsports*, there are 168 openly LGBTQ+ athletes competing at the Tokyo Games, which is triple the then-record total from the 2016 Olympics (56). “I feel incredibly proud to say that I’m a gay man and also an Olympic champion,” Daley said via the Olympic News Service after winning gold. “I feel very empowered by that.”*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Kris Wu: Why a superstar sparked China's sexual consent debate](#) [Waiyee Yip, *BBC News*, 28 July 2021]

*The fallout surrounding Chinese-Canadian actor and singer Kris Wu has been fast and furious. After he was accused of rape by an alleged victim earlier this month, at least 24 more women have come forward alleging inappropriate behaviour. More than a dozen firms—including global brands Louis Vuitton and Porsche—have severed ties with Wu and there are numerous calls for him to quit entertainment and leave China. The 30-year-old has denied all allegations. Support online for the women involved—especially for the main accuser, 19-year-old college student Du Meizhu—has been overwhelming. This, say women's rights activists, is an encouraging sign that awareness of sexual consent is growing, in a country where female survivors are often victim-blamed. The incident comes as awareness of gender-based violence in China has grown, sparked by the #MeToo movement in 2018 involving prominent figures across different parts of society.*

[Report: UK military failing to protect women from abuse](#) [Sylvia Hui, *The Associated Press*, 25 July 2021]

*Around two-thirds of female veterans in the British armed forces have experienced bullying, harassment or discrimination in their careers, a parliamentary report said Sunday. The report also said that women who reported serious sexual offences are “denied justice” by an inadequate military court system and complaints process. Parliament's defense committee found that 64% of female veterans and 58% of serving women said they have experienced bullying, harassment, discrimination in the army. The committee heard accounts of “unacceptable behaviors”*



*experienced by servicewomen, including gang rape, bullying for refusing sexual advances and assault by senior officers. Others reported “witnessing friends being attacked by groups of men but being too afraid to report it,” and said mess halls and accommodation were seen as “places of danger.” “The complaints system, as it stands, is woefully inadequate and leaves most feeling unable to come forward,” said lawmaker and veteran Sarah Atherton, who chairs the subcommittee on women in the armed forces. “We also heard accusations of senior officers sweeping complaints under the rug to protect their own reputations and careers.”*

[South Korean archer’s short hair draws anti-feminist sentiment at home](#) [Ju-min Park, Reuters, 29 July 2021]

*The short haircut of South Korean archer An San, who has won two gold medals at the Tokyo Olympics, has attracted anti-feminist sentiment at home. Online abuse, calling her hairstyle “feminist”, comes against a backdrop of rising anti-feminist sentiment among South Korean young men. An herself said she would answer only questions related to the Games, even before a reporter finished a question about the online hostility. Growing animosity toward feminism and public policy to promote women’s rights has become a hot topic in South Korea. Some South Korean politicians and celebrities posted messages and their own short-hair photos to support An. “With that firm look, please shoot through every prejudice in the world. We stand by your short-cut hair and support you,” Sim Sang-jung, a lawmaker from a minority Justice Party, said in a tweet. Another post urged people to call the Korea Archery Association to defend An from online hatred.*

[Tokyo 2020: S Korea TV sorry for using pizza to depict Italy](#) [BBC News, 26 July 2021]

*Pizza for Italy, Dracula for Romania and Chernobyl for Ukraine. These were the pictures and captions used by a South Korean broadcaster to depict nations at the opening ceremony of the Tokyo Olympic Games. MBC has since apologised for offending viewers, after complaints the visuals were “offensive” and “ridiculous”. The channel said it wanted to make it easier for viewers to understand the entering countries quickly but said it was an “inexcusable mistake”. A Twitter thread by freelance journalist Raphael Rashid drew wide attention to the “unique” descriptions where even civil unrest was not off the cards. When Haiti’s athletes walked on to the stadium, for instance, an on-screen caption described the country as one “with an unstable political situation due to the assassination of the president”. And when the Syrian team entered, a caption read: “A civil war that has been going on for 10 years.” MBC has been in trouble for this very same offence before. It was fined after using similar captions and images at the Opening Ceremony for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. It had then referred to Zimbabwe “as a country with deadly inflation”.*

## MISCELLANEOUS

[50% of Americans Think Gun Violence is a “Very Big Problem”](#) [Jean Dimeo, Route Fifty, 23 July 2021]

*About half of Americans think gun violence is a “very big problem” across the United States, according to a [Pew Research Center analysis](#). The only issue rated as a larger concern is health care affordability. Attitudes about gun violence differ widely by race, ethnicity, party affiliation*

and community, according to the analysis. About 80% of Black adults surveyed say gun violence is a very big problem, while 58% of Hispanics and 39% of Whites view gun violence the same way. Also, Democrats and left-leaning independents are far more likely than Republicans and conservative-leaning voters to see gun violence as a major issue (73% versus 18%). Other gun violence polls offer similar results based on race and political affiliation, but there is general consensus on certain approaches. For example, about 90% of those [surveyed by Quinnipiac University](#) earlier this year approved of firearm background checks. And 74% approved of “red flag” laws, which permit police or family members to petition a court to order temporary removal of firearms from a person who may be a danger to others or themselves.

[“Abhorrent”: State Department to investigate swastika etched into elevator wall at the agency](#) [Deirdre Shesgreen, USA TODAY, 27 July 2021]

The State Department will investigate the appearance of a swastika etched into the wall of an elevator at the agency, a spokeswoman said Tuesday. “This hateful graffiti has been removed, and this incident will be investigated,” Jalina Porter, the State Department’s principal deputy spokesperson, told reporters during a briefing Tuesday. She said it was discovered in an elevator late Monday. The news was first reported by Axios, which said the antisemitic symbol was etched into an elevator wall near the office of State Department’s special envoy to monitor and combat antisemitism. Porter did not answer a question about whether State Department officials believe the incident is related to the mission of that office. Secretary of State Antony Blinken sent a message to agency employees deploring the incident as “abhorrent,” according to a copy of the note obtained by USA TODAY. Blinken has Jewish roots and his stepfather was a Holocaust survivor who spent time as a young boy in the Nazi death camps.

[California Woman Who Fought to Honor Rosie the Riveter Dies](#) [The Associated Press, 27 July 2021]

Phyllis Gould, one of the millions of women who worked in defense plants in World War II and who later relentlessly fought for recognition of those “Rosie the Riveters,” has died. She was 99. “She wants on her gravestone: ‘Mission Accomplished,’” her 95-year-old sister, Marian Sousa, told the paper on Monday. “I think she did it all.” Some 6 million women joined the workforce. Gould, a welder, was one of the first six women hired at a shipyard in Richmond in the San Francisco Bay Area for the war effort. After the war, she became an interior decorator, married and divorced twice, had five children and moved around before settling in Fairfax. She was “kind of like a hippie, you know, where the wind blows,” her sister said. Gould and other Rosies met with former President Barack Obama and former Vice President Joe Biden in 2014. She pushed for the declaration of national Rosie the Riveter Day, held annually on March 21, and before her death was helping design a Congressional Gold Medal to be issued next year to honor the Rosies. [\[REPRINT\]](#)

[DOD Prioritizes Military Spouse Input, Launches 2021 Active Duty Spouse Survey](#) [DOD News, 28 July 2021]

The Department of Defense announced today the launch of its long-running biennial Active Duty Spouse Survey. For the first time, every active-duty spouse will have an opportunity to provide feedback about their military life experience. The Department encourages all active-duty spouses

to participate in this survey. The Active Duty Spouse Survey provides the DOD with a barometer on how to adjust family policy and programs in the coming years, gathering data on issues, such as military benefits, financial stability, spouse employment, child care, and the overall health and well-being of spouses, children and families. While some spouses will be randomly selected for the scientifically sampled survey, this year the department is also offering an opportunity to all active-duty spouses to provide their feedback on key issues, challenges, and concerns. Spouses can visit the Department of Defense Office of People Analytics [survey portal](#) to complete the short survey.

[German POWs picked potatoes and painted in Aroostook County. A new exhibit shows their work.](#) [Troy R. Bennett, *The Bangor Daily News* (Bangor, Maine), 27 July 2021]

On Oct. 14, 1944, an escaped German prisoner of war strolled into a shop in New York City's Union Square. He was there to buy canvases. The Austrian-born painter had walked off a logging work detail in the New Hampshire woods two months earlier, leaving a note saying the labor was destroying his hands and he was afraid he would lose his ability to paint. Art was all that mattered to him. An alert art supply store clerk who had been shown the man's picture in advance called the FBI. Franz Bacher, 28, was arrested without incident. Instead of facing harsh punishment, Bacher was sent to a Maine prisoner-of-war camp where—in addition to picking potatoes for local farmers—he was allowed to paint. Camp Houlton in Aroostook County had a dedicated art program. Many of the 3,500 men held there between 1944 and 1946 took advantage. Nearly 80 years later, their creative works are reaching a wider audience thanks to a joint [online](#) and in-person exhibition between museums in Houlton and Portland.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[GovExec Daily: The Culture Wars, Return to Offices and Management](#) [Adam Butler and Ross Gianfortune, *Government Executive*, 26 July 2021] [PODCAST]

The political and social divides in the United States are deep and can affect relationships in all parts of someone's life. The COVID-19 crisis has brought new divisions into these relationships around the pandemic itself. As workplaces reopen, employers and employees will have to navigate a new environment. Leslie Parker is a partner based in the San Francisco office of the management consulting firm Kearney and a member of the firm's Operations and Performance practice. She also chairs the global strategy and management consultancy's People Committee of the Kearney Board, which covers Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in its agenda. She is the author of the Kearney article, "COVID brings the "culture wars" off Twitter and into the workplace." She joined the podcast to discuss her post and how to navigate culture wars around COVID-19 in the workplace.

[Minnesota's last survivor of Holocaust children's rescue offers lesson in history](#) [Jean Hopfensperger, *The Minnesota Star Tribune* (Minneapolis, Minn.), 26 July 2021]

Benno Black is the last known person in Minnesota who participated in a Jewish children rescue effort—called kindertransport—at the brink of World War II. In July 1939, he boarded a train with other Jewish children bound for England, carrying a leather suitcase with his school notebook, pressed flowers from his mother, family photos and a few other mementos. He was 13. Eighty-two years later, contents of that suitcase and Black's poignant journey are part of a new

*exhibit at the American Swedish Institute about the rescue effort that moved 10,000 Jewish children to safety, mostly in England but also Sweden and other nations. Black, now 95, and his wife, Annette, last week peered into the glass display cases holding distant memories, grateful that his personal story has been transformed into public history.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Pentagon orders return to masks for all inside DOD facilities at many locations](#) [Corey Dickstein, *Stars and Stripes*, 28 July 2021]

*The Pentagon on Wednesday announced it would once again require all individuals to wear face coverings when indoors at Defense Department facilities in locations deemed high risk by federal health officials for the spread of coronavirus. The [directive](#) issued Wednesday by Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen Hicks walks back guidance issued in April that allowed service members and others who had been fully vaccinated against the virus to forgo mask-wearing at all Defense Department facilities worldwide. It comes one day after the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued new guidance encouraging vaccinated Americans to don masks indoors in certain locations where the coronavirus is spreading rapidly. Biden is expected to announce on Thursday that all federal employees and government contractors be fully vaccinated or take regular tests for the coronavirus, according to reports by multiple news outlets, including *The Washington Post* and *CNN*.*

[Pentagon, reacting to Biden order, working on plan for mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations](#)

[Meghann Myers and Howard Altman, *Military Times*, 29 July 2021]

*Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin will begin consulting military medical professionals, as well as the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to “determine how and when to make recommendations to President Joe Biden” about adding the COVID-19 vaccines to the full list of requirements for military personnel, the Pentagon announced Thursday evening. The announcement came in the wake of Biden’s call earlier in the day for the Pentagon to look into adding those vaccines to the list of required inoculations for service members. Biden also ordered that all federal workers not vaccinated against COVID-19 will be subject to masking, social distancing and mandatory testing. Whether service members will be required to get vaccinated, they are considered federal workers for the purposes of the new prevention protocol. That would mean weekly testing, in addition to so-called sentinel testing the military put in place in spring 2020, for troops preparing to deploy, redeploy or travel on orders. About 54 percent of active and reserve troops have received at least one dose of a vaccine, per DOD’s most recently posted numbers.*

[The problem that Simone Biles just laid bare](#) [Chris Cillizza, *CNN*, 28 July 2021] [OPINION]

*Rewind to that moment when Simone Biles, without question the greatest gymnast of all time, landed a vault awkwardly in the team competition at the Olympics. Consider if, following that vault—and Biles’ decision to pull herself out of the rest of that competition and the individual all-around one as well—it was revealed that she had sprained her ankle. Or had a stress reaction in her foot. Or had torn her anterior cruciate ligament. The universal reaction would be one of shock and disappointment, both that she couldn’t compete and that we couldn’t see her compete. Because we all understand that if something went wrong with her body then, of course, she couldn’t compete. Now consider what did happen. In the wake of her decision to pull herself out*

*of the team competition, it was revealed that she did so for mental health reasons, the same reasons she decided to pull herself out of the individual all-around competition set to start later this week. What Biles' withdrawal highlights is the yawning gap between how we think about and treat physical illness versus mental illness. And our ongoing—and demonstrably false—belief that the two are not interrelated.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Whistleblowing in the U.S.](#) [Adam Butler and Ross Gianfortune, *Government Executive*, 30 July 2021] [PODCAST]

*Each year, National Whistleblower Day is observed on July 30 to commemorate the first American whistleblower protection law, a resolution passed by the Continental Congress in 1778 after ten whistleblowers reported wrongdoing and abuses committed by a superior officer in the Continental Navy. Since the beginning of the United States, whistleblowers have been an integral part in government oversight and accountability. Irvin McCullough is a National Security Analyst at the Government Accountability Project. He joined the show to discuss National Whistleblower Day and the state of whistleblower rights.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

## MISCONDUCT

[Scrubbed AWACS Flights Lead to Toxic Leadership Allegations at Tinker Air Force Base](#)

[Stephen Losey, *Military.com*, 23 July 2021]

*A leaked audio recording of a group commander at Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma, lecturing airmen after sorties were canceled due to crew fatigue has raised concerns about the wing's leadership style and safety culture. The concerns became public July 17, when the unofficial Air Force amn/nco/snco Facebook page posted an account by an anonymous author alleging a "toxic culture of leadership" in the operations group for Tinker's 552nd Air Control Wing, which flies the Boeing E-3 Sentry Airborne Warning and Control System, or AWACS, aircraft. According to the account, AWACS crews last week were ordered to show up for exercise sorties with roughly half the sleep they needed. The writer said base leaders decided it was not safe to fly, calling off all three planned flights and allowing the crews to rest. But the next afternoon, Col. Gary Donovan, commander of the 552nd Operations Group, "berated" the crews for scrubbing the flights, the account said.*

[U.S. Coast Guard Academy permanently relieves former command master chief](#) [Geoff Ziezulewicz, *Navy Times*, 24 July 2021]

*The former enlisted leader of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy who abruptly resigned in April and was subsequently investigated on accusations of "alleged inappropriate conduct" was permanently relieved earlier this month, but Academy officials are refusing to explain why. After Master Chief Brett VerHulst's resignation in April, academy superintendent Rear Adm. William Kelly reassigned him to another command as VerHulst awaited retirement orders and an investigation commenced. In an email late Friday afternoon, academy spokesman David Santos said Kelly "permanently relieved" VerHulst on July 9 but declined to provide a specific reason for the move. Santos said that the investigation "found no evidence of sexual assault, sexual*

*contact or sexual harassment.” “A small number of academy personnel reported that Master Chief VerHulst demonstrated behaviors in personal interactions that made them uncomfortable,” Santos said. “This resulted in the Superintendent’s loss of confidence that Master Chief VerHulst could continue to perform his duties effectively.”*

## **RACISM**

[Alaska lawyer out of job after social media post inquiry](#) [The Associated Press, 28 July 2021]

*An assistant attorney general in Alaska identified by a news outlet as the person behind a social media account that posted racist and antisemitic comments no longer works for the state Department of Law, an agency spokesperson said. Grace Lee told the [Anchorage Daily News](#) that Matthias Cicotte’s last day with the department was Tuesday. She declined to say if he resigned or was fired. The Guardian earlier this month identified Cicotte as posting racist and antisemitic material under a pseudonym on Twitter. The outlet said it had identified him using evidence provided by “anti-fascist researchers” and its own investigation. The Council on American-Islamic Relations had called for Cicotte’s firing. In a statement Wednesday, Robert McCaw, the group’s government affairs director, urged Taylor to review any case Cicotte worked on “that involved racial or religious discrimination to ensure that the case was handled properly. We welcome the fact that an individual who apparently espouses bigoted views will no longer be administering justice in Alaska.”*

[Atlanta-area spa shooter pleads guilty to four killings and gets life in prison, but still could face death penalty](#) [Maria Cartaya, Amara Walker, Angela Barajas and Eric Levenson, CNN, 27 July 2021]

*Robert Aaron Long agreed in a Cherokee County courtroom to plead guilty to 23 charges in all, including four counts of malice murder, and was sentenced to four consecutive life sentences without the possibility of parole, plus 35 years. The sentence represents the first part of a lengthy legal path ahead. Long still faces an additional 19 charges in nearby Fulton County, where prosecutors will be pursuing the death penalty for hate crimes targeting the sex and race of the victims. Six of the eight victims were Asian women, and the shooting emphasized the wider rise in racism and violence against Asian Americans over the past year. In particular, the attacks illuminated the specific misogyny and racism that Asian women face. The hate crime charges against Long in Fulton County are believed to be the first application of the law in Georgia.*

[Racism of rioters takes center stage in Jan. 6 hearing](#) [Aaron Morrison, The Associated Press, 28 July 2021]

*It had only been hinted at in previous public examinations of the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection: Scores of rioters attacked police officers not just with makeshift weapons, stun guns and fists, but with racist slurs and accusations of treason. Four officers, two from the U.S. Capitol Police and two from the D.C.’s Metropolitan Police Department, on Tuesday detailed the racism and bigotry they encountered during the violent assault on the Capitol. Capitol Police Officer Harry Dunn told lawmakers about an exchange he had with rioters, who disputed that President Joe Biden defeated Trump in the last presidential election. When Dunn, who is Black, argued with the rioters that he voted for Biden and that his vote should be counted, a crowd began hurling the N-*

word at him. Dunn said another Black male officer told him that, while confronting the rioters on Jan. 6, he was told to “Put your gun down and we’ll show you what kind of n—— you really are!” In January, as images and video emerged from the attacks on the Capitol, a racist and anti-Semitic element among the rioters became apparent. And in the nearly seven months since the attacks, more video investigations revealed several rioters had flashed White supremacist gang signs and “White power” hand signals during the insurrection.

[“I’m Black, my partner’s White—stop asking me if this is my baby”](#) [BBC News, 29 July 2021]  
[COMMENTARY]

*From the maternity ward I sent pictures of Bonnie to people I loved and a few responded with one-line sentences, not sugar-coated in the way a new mum might expect. “She’s really White.” “I prefer the picture where she looks more African.” “She’s very pale isn’t she?” One felt the need to use capitals: “She’s STILL White.” Five weeks after we left hospital, a lovely walk turned unpleasant. A man appeared, aggressively shouting, “Why is your baby so White?” He circled around us, seemingly enraged. I was appalled, afraid, and embarrassed by the audience he had attracted. I couldn’t understand why this man, who was the same colour as me, was so offended. In fact, all the negative comments about my baby’s skin colour were from people the same hue as me. I didn’t get it. I had never imagined mixed-race families had to go through this. My biggest regret is that I didn’t defend my family. I said nothing. I walked away from this angry stranger, holding my tears back until I reached the safety of my own home.*

[She was forbidden as a young woman from trying on her dream wedding gown because she’s Black. Now, at 94, she finally did it.](#) [Sydney Page, *The Washington Post*, 19 July 2021]

*Martha Tucker always dreamed of wearing a classic white gown on her wedding day. But when she got married in 1952, she was barred from entering a bridal shop because of her race. As a Black woman in Birmingham, Ala., she was forbidden from trying on her dream dress: an embroidered white gown with lace overlay and long sleeves. At the time, “I wasn’t even thinking about buying a wedding dress because I knew I couldn’t go in the store,” Tucker, who is now 94, recalled. There were no Black-owned bridal stores in the city, she said, and White-owned retail stores didn’t allow Black people to try on clothing. “If you bought anything you had to go in the basement and get used stuff,” Tucker said. Tucker and her husband wed in a simple ceremony in their pastor’s living room. Not having a traditional wedding—or dress—has been a sore spot ever since. “I always have been sad about it because I felt like I should have been able to wear it if I wanted to,” Tucker said. Recently, though, Tucker’s wish to wear a wedding dress was finally granted, when her family brought her to a bridal shop for a long overdue gown fitting—nearly 70 years after her wedding day.*

[State lawmakers work to strip old “Whites only” covenants](#) [Susan Haigh, *The Associated Press*, 28 July 2021]

*Fred Ware and his son were researching the history of the home he’s owned in the Hartford suburbs since 1950 when they discovered something far uglier than they expected. Tucked in a list of rules on the home’s original deed from the developer was a provision that said: “No persons of any race other than the White race shall use or occupy any building or any lot,” with the exception of “domestic servants of a different race.” While the U.S. Supreme Court in 1948*

*ruled such racially restrictive housing covenants unenforceable, many remain on paper today and can be difficult to remove. In Connecticut, David Ware asked legislators to help homeowners strike the language, and a bill ultimately was signed into law by Gov. Ned Lamont, a Democrat, in July. The nation's reckoning with racial injustice has given new momentum to efforts to unearth racist property covenants and eradicate the language restricting residency to White people. It also has highlighted the ramifications such restrictions have had on housing segregation and minority home ownership challenges that persist today. Scot X. Esdaile, president of the Connecticut State Conference of the NAACP, said the law's passage is bittersweet because housing discrimination remains an enduring problem.*

[St. Louis County health director says he was called racist slurs during mask order meeting](#)

[Minyvonne Burke, NBC News, 29 July 2021]

*St. Louis County's acting health director said he was humiliated, attacked and called racist slurs during a council meeting on a newly reinstated mask mandate. The director, Faisal Khan, was asked to present at Tuesday's public meeting as council members considered terminating a mandate that St. Louis County Executive Sam Page put in place to slow the spread of the Covid-19 delta variant. Khan said in a phone interview on Thursday that the crowd was rowdy before the meeting even began because some of them had attended a political rally held outside the venue. "The anger was already palpable," he told NBC News. "By the time I was asked to come to the podium, the train had left the station and it was only going to go one way." Khan detailed what happened at the meeting in a [letter](#) to Council Chairwoman Rita Days, who was in attendance. "My time before the Council began with a dog-whistle question from Councilman Tim Fitch, who said he wanted to emphasize for the assembled crowd that I was not from this country," he wrote in the letter.*

## SEXISM

[Cav regiment "looking into" who issued off-duty uniform restrictions aimed at women](#) [Davis Winkie, Army Times, 26 July 2021]

*The 2nd Cavalry Regiment confirmed Monday that it is "looking into" a potential equal opportunity policy violation related to a subordinate unit's restrictions on off-duty attire for women. The regiment's official Facebook page responded to a screenshot of WhatsApp messages posted by U.S. Army WTF Moments, a popular Facebook page covering Army culture and current events. The messages appeared to show a directive restricting the wear of civilian clothing by soldiers on their days off. "On days off, uniform is OCP [the Army Combat Uniform] until 1700, unless told otherwise by me," said the forwarded message. "If anyone is caught in civilians, consequences will occur." "Female Soldiers need to know to be mindful of what they're wearing around squadron on their day off, or after work hours," the message read. "Yes, they're off, but everyone else is around and it's noticeably [sic] when they're wearing distasteful clothing." A spokesperson for the Germany-based regiment confirmed the authenticity of the messages when reached by Army Times. "We encourage any Soldier who feels like they are not being treated with dignity and respect to reach out through their chain of command, the EO program, the Inspector General, or the Regimental Commander's open door policy," said the spokesperson.*



[The Sexualization Of Women In Sports Extends Even To What They Wear](#) [Sharon Pruitt-Young, NPR, 23 July 2021]

*Women being judged on their perceived femininity rather than their athleticism is a symptom of a bigger problem. Sports are often a “microcosm of our society,” said Akilah Carter-Francique, the executive director for the Institute for the Study of Sport, Society and Social Change at San José State University. “There are those societal expectations that fall in line with gender norms that are couched in patriarchy about how women should present themselves. ... From hair to makeup to clothing, to how tight [or loose] the clothing is, to the colors,” Carter-Francique told NPR. “[All] so that they can be more in line with this notion of girlhood, of womanhood, of what is deemed femininity.” Having to combat sexist standards that echo what they’re already dealing with isn’t the only thing that can turn girls away. A lack of access and cultural stigma also contribute to low participation numbers, according to a [report](#) from the Women’s Sports Foundation, and girls who do stick with sports may find themselves in programs that receive less attention and funding.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

## SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARASSMENT

[Court-martial of ex-AFRL commander scheduled at Wright-Patterson](#) [Eileen McClory, *The Dayton Daily News* (Dayton, Ohio), 28 July 2021]

*The first court-martial of a general officer in the history of the Air Force has been scheduled for Jan. 10 at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, according to the Air Force docket. Ex-Air Force Research Lab commander Maj. Gen. William Cooley is charged under Article 120, which concerns sexual assault. A court-martial is analogous to a civilian trial. Cooley is charged with kissing and touching a woman without her consent in Albuquerque, N.M., in August 2018, according to the Air Force charge. A military attorney for Cooley has told the Dayton Daily News there was no unwanted touching and the case should not go to trial. Cooley was the commander of the Air Force Research Lab at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base before he was relieved of his duties in January 2020. Cooley is currently a special assistant to the AFMC commander at WPAFB with duties primarily focused on advancing the command’s digital campaign, according to the base. “An Air Force general has never been court-martialed,” Don Christensen, a former chief prosecutor for the Air Force and the president of the group Protect Our Defenders, told the Dayton Daily News. “It’s a big deal that they’re doing this.”*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Guillen family calls for court-martial of soldier’s harasser as military considers crime reforms](#) [Rose L. Thayer, *Stars and Stripes*, 30 July 2021]

*The family of Spc. Vanessa Guillen, the soldier killed at Fort Hood last year, wants the Army to court-martial the platoon sergeant who was found to have sexually harassed her prior to her death. The request came as part of their call for the service to hold Army leaders more accountable for their actions and advocate for a measure to make sexual harassment a standalone crime in the military. A court-martial would generate publicly available documents showing whether a leader was punished and to what extent. “One of the most important parts of this case is the need for change and accountability and justice for Vanessa,” Natalie Khawam, an*

*attorney for Guillen's family, said this month after she and the family met with Gen. John Murray, who led an administrative investigation into Guillen's chain of command. In Guillen's case, the Army determined through an administrative investigation, known as a 15-6, that she was sexually harassed on two instances by a noncommissioned officer serving as her platoon sergeant within the 3rd Cavalry Regiment. For now, the sergeant, who has not been named by the Army, faces nonjudicial punishment, the results of which can remain hidden because it's considered a personnel matter that is not available through public records.*

[House panel looks to help military sexual assault survivors](#) [Rebecca Kheel, *The Hill*, 27 July 2021]

*A House Armed Services Committee subpanel is including changes to help sexual assault survivors in its portion of the annual defense policy bill, while leaving a broader fight on overhauling the military justice system to the full committee. In a background call with reporters Tuesday previewing the personnel subcommittee's portion of the defense bill, aides said the panel would add a requirement that the military services notify sexual assault survivors of the outcome of any administration action taken against perpetrators. The new bill would also require the Pentagon to produce a list of civilian victims service organizations that survivors can use if they need legal representation, health care or other services, aides said. And it would require all administrative separation boards to have a legal officer as a recorder "so that it further protects the service members' interests," aides said.*

["They Choose Not to Listen": Thae Ohu Speaks for the First Time on Her Experience in the Marines](#) [Konstantin Toropin, *Military.com*, 23 July 2021]

*[Thae] Ohu's complicated history, both her mental health and the experience she describes of a sexual assault in the Marine Corps, were shaping events when she attacked her boyfriend, who safely hid behind a bedroom door while Ohu stabbed at it, in April 2020. According to a website run by her family, she was experiencing a flashback to her sexual assault in Okinawa, Japan, at the time. A condition of the interview with *Military.com* was that Ohu would not be asked about details of her rape, or the attack on her boyfriend, to avoid re-traumatizing her. The near stabbing resulted in several charges, including attempted murder. In May 2021, she pled guilty to some of the charges, the most serious of which was aggravated assault with a dangerous weapon, leading to her release from the Navy Consolidated Brig in Chesapeake, Virginia. The boyfriend submitted testimony on her behalf describing Ohu as "a victim both of sexual assault and from prejudice by her command." Along the way, her story became a very public symbol of the way military commanders can fail those under their care.*

## **SUICIDE**

["Mental health is health. Period." Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin decries stigma in message to troops](#) [Tom Vanden Brook, *USA TODAY*, 26 July 2021]

*Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin expressed deep concern about suicide among troops during a visit to U.S. forces stationed in Alaska where there has been an alarming spike in those deaths. At least six soldiers have died by probable suicide in Alaska since Dec. 30, and suicide is suspected in several others, *USA TODAY* has reported. That surge has followed several years of increases*

*in suicide deaths among troops across the armed services. Austin cited stress on troops and the stigma of seeking treatment for mental health issues as contributing factors. Last week, Army experts and Defense officials cited the stress caused by life in the military, demands for troops to confront China's rising influence and access to counseling. "I'm mindful of the stress that they're often under and I'm deeply concerned about the suicide rates, not only here but across the force," Austin told reporters Saturday during a visit at Eielson Air Base in Alaska. "As you've heard me say before, one loss by suicide is too many and while we're working hard on this problem, we have a lot more to do. And I believe that has—it has to start with removing the stigma attached to mental health issues."*

## **VETERANS**

[Bill Proposes LGBTQ Veterans Advisory Committee at VA](#) [The Associated Press, 29 July 2021] U.S. Rep. Chris Pappas of New Hampshire has introduced a bill to establish an LGBTQ Veterans Advisory Committee at the Department of Veterans Affairs. "LGBTQ+ veterans, whether they served during the 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' era, in the years following, or more recently during the Trump administration's transgender military ban, all face unique challenges after separation or retirement," Pappas, a Democrat and member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, said in a statement Thursday. The committee's membership would include professionals in fields related to health care and other needs unique to the LGBTQ veterans; at least one lesbian, gay, or bisexual veteran with a service-connected disability; at least one transgender veteran with a service-connected disability; minority LGBTQ veterans, and LGBTQ veterans who have been both voluntarily and involuntarily separated from service.

[Opinion: Medical marijuana saved me and other veterans. Why does the military punish us for it?](#) [Lindsay Church, The Washington Post, 27 July 2021] [OPINION]

*For many veterans like myself, cannabis is the difference between living a productive life and living in constant pain. But I never thought that using an alternative medical treatment would put the biggest opportunity of my career in jeopardy. While serving in the Navy, I experienced a series of failed surgeries and medical procedures beginning in 2009 and was left virtually dependent on narcotic painkillers. At one point, I was on 17 medications while on active duty and holding a top secret security clearance. Somewhere around surgery number six in 2014, I finally made the decision to try cannabis, purchasing it legally from a dispensary where I lived, in Washington state. Cannabis turned out to be a lifesaving choice, allowing me to wean off the addictive narcotics. Cannabis legalization is inevitable. That's why I am calling on the VA to reevaluate their policies on cannabis, and challenging Congress to introduce and pass legislation that allows VA physicians to discuss cannabis use with patients.*

[Wounded warriors share message of resilience in Florida](#) [Tech. Sgt. James Hodgman, Space Launch Delta 45 Public Affairs, 30 July 2021]

*More than 12,000 Airmen and nine Guardians have enrolled in the AFW2 program with 85% of them suffering from invisible wounds such as post-traumatic stress disorder or life threatening conditions like cancer. Maj. Marie Perkins, 633rd Medical Support Squadron chief information officer and information systems flight commander at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia, was*

*diagnosed with stage 2 breast cancer in October 2018. "I went to my doctor and went through a mammogram, an ultrasound and I chose to do a biopsy. A week later, the results came back. I had stage 2A breast cancer and it was aggressive." At the time of her diagnosis, Perkins was 32, the mother of an 18-month old girl and was looking forward to completing a medical fellowship program. Established in 2005, the AFW2 program provides care and assistance for wounded, ill or injured Airmen and Guardians from the time of their injuries until they transition back to military duty or civilian life. The program consists of case management and support services. "We work hand in hand with medical and administrative professionals to ensure our wounded warriors have all they need," said Melissa Wiest, AFW2 program outreach and ambassador coordinator. "Our team has 42 recovery care coordinators across the Air Force to help manage cases and we currently have about 3,500 active cases right now."*