

## DEOMI NEWS LINKS 13 AUGUST 2021

### HIGHLIGHTS

[Biden's Pentagon nominees: More diverse and more of them](#) [Joe Gould, *Defense News*, 12 August 2021]

*Eight months into President Joe Biden's first year as commander-in-chief, he's making good on a campaign pledge to form an administration that would "look like America," selecting for the Defense Department top officials meant to reflect the country's diversity. Recent weeks saw two LGBTQ women confirmed to top military positions. Air Force Undersecretary Gina Ortiz Jones is the first out lesbian to serve as undersecretary of a military branch, while Shawn Skelly, the assistant secretary of defense for readiness, is the first out transgender person in the job and highest-ranking out transgender defense official in U.S. history. While Trump administration Pentagon nominees were overwhelmingly White and male, the Biden administration says 54% of its national security nominees—to the Pentagon, State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development—are women, 40% are people of color, and at least 7% identify as LGBTQ. At the Pentagon alone, 55% of political appointees are women, about 46% are people of color and more than 10% identify as LGBTQ.*

[Census data: U.S. is diversifying, White population shrinking](#) [Mike Schneider, *The Associated Press* 13 August 2021]

*No racial or ethnic group dominates for those under age 18, and White people declined in numbers for the first time on record in the overall U.S. population as the Hispanic and Asian populations boomed this past decade, according to the 2020 census data. The [figures released Thursday](#) by the U.S. Census Bureau offered the most detailed portrait yet of how the country has changed since 2010 and will also be instrumental in redrawing the nation's political maps. The numbers are sure to set off an intense partisan battle over representation at a time of deep national division and fights over voting rights. The numbers could help determine control of the House in the 2022 elections and provide an electoral edge for years to come. The data also will shape how \$1.5 trillion in annual federal spending is distributed.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[New study reveals deep divide in how Americans view the nation's progress toward racial equality](#) [Nicquel Terry Ellis, *CNN*, 12 August 2021]

*The United States is deeply divided in how Americans view the nation's progress toward racial equality and much of the division is reflected in the differing beliefs of people of color and White people, according to a [new study released Thursday by the Pew Research Center](#). The study surveyed more than 10,000 adults in July on several questions related to the public's attention to slavery and racism, whether more needs to be done to achieve equal rights in the country and if White people benefit from privilege over Black people. Pew found that 75% of Black adults, 64% of Asian American adults and 59% of Hispanic adults say increased attention on the nation's history of slavery and racism is a good thing. Among White adults, 46% said greater attention to slavery and racism was good. The study also concluded that there is division along racial and*

*political party lines when it comes to views on the nation's progress in the last 50 years. There is also division in how the nation should achieve equality. According to the study, 58% of Black adults say most of the nation's laws and major institutions need to be completely rebuilt compared to 18% of White adults.*

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## CULTURE

[Army selects first civilian director of its Criminal Investigation Command](#) [Caitlin Doornbos, *Stars and Stripes*, 11 August 2021]

*The Army has selected a federal law enforcement officer as the first civilian to lead its Criminal Investigation Command, following a major overhaul to its leadership structure after an independent committee found the agency failed to support victims and prevent and investigate crimes. Special Agent Gregory Ford will serve as the new director of the Army's criminal investigative agency, known commonly as CID, the service announced Wednesday. He comes to the agency following 16 years at the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, where he last served as deputy director of operations. "The selection of a director is an important step forward and one of several changes to come as the restructure process continues," the Army said. The restructuring was spurred by the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee's findings in a December report that the CID detachment at Fort Hood, Texas, "was unstable, under-experienced, over-assigned and under-resourced leading to inefficiencies that had an adverse impact on investigations, especially complex cases involving sex crimes and soldier deaths."*

[Hair, hands and hosiery: Air Force overhauling outdated rules on airmen's looks](#) [Rachel Cohen, *Air Force Times*, 10 August 2021]

*"We trust our [officers and enlisted] airmen... with incredible resources and significant responsibilities," Lt. Gen. Brian Kelly, Air Force deputy chief of staff for manpower, personnel and services, said in an [Aug. 10 release](#). "We likewise trust they can figure out what it takes and means to maintain standards without specifying exact behavior in every situation." Air Force leaders are green-lighting hands in pockets as part of a broad overhaul to dress and appearance rules that will go into effect in October. More than 30 recommendations from the Air Force Uniform Board will become enshrined in official guidance. Rules that were once seen as a means for uniformity and professionalism have proven restrictive over time. Another measure on its way out is the ban on using a cell phone or drinking water while walking in uniform. That will likewise be dropped from the revised Air Force instruction in October. Several other uniform updates are on tap as well, including a lightweight combat uniform for airmen in hot weather, women's mess dress pants, workout gear and more.*

[Corps' sergeant major calls for improved treatment, care of junior Marines](#) [Philip Athey, *Marine Corps Times*, 9 August 2021]

*It is time to start treating junior Marines better to keep more Marines in the Corps longer, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Troy Black said Tuesday. The comments come as the Corps is re-evaluating and making changes to its retention, training and promotion policies as the force is re-shaped to faceoff against China and other near-peer militaries. The Marine Corps*

historically has had the youngest service members in the Department of Defense, with 73.6 percent of enlisted Marines age 25 or younger in 2018. That's compared to 51.9 percent of the Army, 46.9 percent of the Navy and 45.2 percent of the Air Force who were 25 or younger in the same year. Senior leaders should now take on the mindset that every Marine is a careerist and focus on the potential of 18-year-old privates more than their immediate value, Black said. Senior leaders may see a young Marine coming to the end of their first enlistment as "just an E-4, you don't trust him with anything," Black said.

[How Native students fought back against abuse and assimilation at U.S. boarding schools](#) [Sarah Klotz, *The Conversation*, 12 August 2021]

In July 2021, nine Sicangu Lakota students who died at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania were disinterred and returned to their homelands at Whetstone Bay in South Dakota. One of these young people was Ernest Knocks Off. Ernest, who came from the Sicangu Oyate or Burnt Thigh Nation, was among the first group of students to arrive at Carlisle, in 1879. He entered school at age 18 and attempted to run away soon after arriving. He ultimately went on a hunger strike and died of complications of diphtheria on Dec. 14, 1880. My new book ["Writing Their Bodies: Restoring Rhetorical Relations at the Carlisle Indian School"](#) explores how Indigenous children resisted English-only education at Carlisle, which became the prototype for both Indian schools across the U.S. and residential schools in Canada. While digging into archives of Carlisle students' writing, I found that young people like Ernest were not passive victims of U.S. colonization. Instead, they fought—in Ernest's case, to his death—to retain their languages and cultures as the assimilationist experiment in education unfolded.

[Johnny Weir Responds After "Masculinity" of His Outfit for Olympics Closing Ceremony Is Questioned](#) [Benjamin VanHoose, *People*, 9 August 2021]

Johnny Weir is defending his style after a social media user criticized it for not fitting into their view of "biblical masculinity." The 37-year-old two-time Olympic figure skater co-hosted NBC's broadcast of the Tokyo Olympics closing ceremony Sunday alongside Tara Lipinski and broadcaster Terry Gannon. One person on Twitter responded to Weir's tweet showing off his glam for the ceremony, they said, "Bring back the days when boys cared about growing up to be actual men. Biblical masculinity over woke fragility." "The man I've grown into is a human that embraces the strength of the man & woman who raised me to be myself," Weir responded. "If you feel squashed by the boot of someone else's beliefs, remember you are free to live your life the way YOU believe. Also, religion isn't an excuse for hate." Back in 2018, Weir opened up about why he never "came out" while he was professionally skating. "I wear my sexuality the same as I wear my sex or my skin color," Weir said in a tweet at the time. "It is something that simply is and something I was born into. I never 'came out' in sport because I didn't imagine it as a great secret & it had nothing to do with my skating or my dreams."

[One of the longest marches of the civil rights movement is honored in Louisiana](#) [Leah Asmelash, *CNN*, 10 August 2021]

The Louisiana Civil Rights Trail is steadily growing after officials in the state unveiled a fourth marker this week honoring a historic march against anti-Black violence. The new marker, unveiled on Monday, is in Young Park in Baton Rouge—marking the 105-mile march from

*Bogalusa to Baton Rouge. The march, known as the Bogalusa Civil Rights March, took place in 1967, four years after the March on Washington. Started by activist A.Z. Young, the 10-day march was a protest against the general treatment of Black Americans, following years of harassment by the KKK in Louisiana. With Monday's addition, the Louisiana Civil Rights Trail now has four markers in place across the state. Each location on the trail is marked by a 6-foot tall steel half-male, half-female silhouette, supposed to resemble a protester holding a picket sign.*

[Reservation Dogs Is as Fresh as It Gets](#) [Shirley Li, *The Atlantic*, 12 August 2021]

*Reservation Dogs tells a coming-of-age story, with its young heroes searching for purpose and a life away from their eastern-Oklahoma community. Each episode sees them learning useful lessons and pursuing youthful antics—stealing a truck, selling meat pies—that belie a deeper shared sadness over their friend's death a year earlier. And yet, while the storytelling beats are familiar, the show itself feels completely new. That's partly because *Reservation Dogs*, created by Sterlin Harjo and Taika Waititi, is a series about Indigenous characters made by a team of predominantly Indigenous directors, writers, and actors. But Harjo and Waititi have accomplished something trickier and riskier than simply centering the faces of people rarely seen on TV. They steep the audience in reservation life and allow episodes to unfurl in stylish, off-kilter ways that play with viewers' expectations of Native characters and narratives. With unflinching specificity, *Reservation Dogs* delivers a mix of grounded and fantastical elements. That dissonance could have been disorienting. Instead, two episodes in—upcoming installments will be released weekly on FX on Hulu—it's the fuel for the show's singular charm.*

[\[TRAILER\]](#)

[Romance fiction award withdrawn for novel about war veteran](#) [Hillel Italie, *The Associated Press*, 6 August 2021]

*The Romance Writers of America has withdrawn an award for a novel widely criticized for its sympathetic portrait of a cavalry officer who participated in the slaughter of Lakota Indians at the Battle of Wounded Knee. On July 31, RWA judges gave Karen Witemeyer's "At Love's Command" the Vivian Award for best romance book "with religious or spiritual elements." Witemeyer's book centers on Matthew Hanger, a veteran from the 1890 massacre whose Christian faith helps him reconcile with the past. News of the award for "At Love's Command" was greeted on social media with anger and disbelief, especially after the RWA initially said that the spiritual category concerned characters who "find redemption for their moral failings and or crimes against humanity." Author Delaney Williams, a Native American, tweeted that the RWA was honoring "stories in which the genocide of my ancestors are used as a plot convention to gain forgiveness, not from those killed, but from a foreign god." A fellow Vivian winner, Sara Whitney, returned her prize in protest.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Some praise, some doubts as Facebook rolls out a prayer tool](#) [Holly Meyer and David Crary, *The Associated Press*, 8 August 2021]

*Facebook already asks for your thoughts. Now it wants your prayers. The social media giant has rolled out a new prayer request feature, a tool embraced by some religious leaders as a cutting-edge way to engage the faithful online. Others are eyeing it warily as they weigh its usefulness*

*against the privacy and security concerns they have with Facebook. In Facebook Groups employing the feature, members can use it to rally prayer power for upcoming job interviews, illnesses and other personal challenges big and small. After they create a post, other users can tap an “I prayed” button, respond with a “like” or other reaction, leave a comment or send a direct message. Facebook began testing it in the U.S. in December as part of an ongoing effort to support faith communities, according to a statement attributed to a company spokesperson. The Rev. Bob Stec, pastor of St. Ambrose Catholic Parish in Brunswick, Ohio, said via email that on one hand, he sees the new feature as a positive affirmation of people’s need for an “authentic community” of prayer, support and worship. Stec also worried about privacy concerns surrounding the sharing of deeply personal traumas.*

[This is why Friday the 13th is considered unlucky—and triskaidekaphobia explained](#) [Rhona Shennan, *The Scotsman* (Edinburgh, UK), 13 August 2021]

*Each year, at least once, Friday the 13th makes an appearance on our calendars—and for some, the date spells nothing but bad news as it is considered highly unlucky. But where does the superstition around this particular date come from? One of the most popular ones regarding the superstition connects the date of Friday the 13th with the demise of the Knights Templar. Hundreds of Knights Templar were arrested on Friday 13 October, 1307, by King Philip IV of France. Another popular theory regarding the unluckiness of Friday the 13th is attributed to the story of Jesus’s last supper, and his crucifixion. Leonardo da Vinci’s painting of the Last Supper presents 13 people in the Upper Room on the 13th of Nisan Maundy Thursday, the night prior to Jesus’s death on Good Friday. Judas, who betrayed Jesus, is also thought to have been the 13th guest to sit at the table. Additionally, the connotations of Friday the 13th being unlucky could be traced back to a novel by Thomas W Lawson called *Friday, the Thirteenth*, which was published in 1907. The story tells the tale of a banker who uses the superstition around Friday the 13th to create a Wall Street panic on that very date.*

[This Photographer Shines A Light On Muslim-American Women Athletes](#) [Eman Mohammed and Amaz Ijaz, *NPR*, 10 August 2021]

*As a member the Muslim-American community, photographer Eman Mohammed began thinking of how little she knows about other Muslim-American women and their accomplishments. To change that, Mohammed decided to start a long-term portraiture project featuring Muslim-American women. As she began the project, she turned her attention to sports and what Muslim-American women’s roles looked like in that field. “The project isn’t aiming to break stereotypes because these women already did the work and shattered it,” Mohammed said. “My goal is to highlight these women as they do it.” The photos document each women’s unique path in the hopes to inspire other Muslim-American women and girls by seeing representation from their own community. The project was started before the pandemic and is still ongoing.*

[Twitter’s racist algorithm is also ageist, ableist and Islamophobic, researchers find](#) [Kevin Collier, *NBC News*, 9 August 2021]

*A [Twitter image-cropping algorithm](#) that went viral last year when users discovered it preferred White people to Black people was also coded with implicit bias against a number of other groups, researchers have found. Researchers looked at how the algorithm, which automatically edited*

*photos to focus on people's faces, dealt with a variety of different people and saw evidence that Muslims, people with disabilities and older people faced similar discrimination. The same artificial intelligence had learned to ignore people with white or gray hair, who wore headscarves for religious or other reasons, or who used wheelchairs, researchers said. The findings were part of a first-of-its-kind contest hosted by Twitter over the weekend at the Def Con hacker conference in Las Vegas. The company invited researchers to unearth new ways to prove that an image-cropping algorithm was inadvertently coded to be biased against particular groups of people. It's a unique step in what has become an important field of research: Finding ways that automated systems trained by existing data resources have become imbued with existing biases in society.*

[Virginia contends with Confederate names on side streets](#) [Matthew Barakat, *The Associated Press*, 9 August 2021]

*It came as a surprise to Mottrom Drive resident Beau Fitzpatrick that he lives on a street named for a Confederate soldier. "Really? I always assumed it was named for an apple, or apple juice," he said, referring to the Mott's brand of apple products. In fact the street in McLean, Virginia, not far from the nation's capital, is named for Mottrom Dulany Ball, a captain in the Fairfax cavalry who was among the first Confederate officers taken prisoner in the Civil War. He became a Republican after the war and later a founding father of Alaska. Mottrom Drive is among scores of side streets identified last year by a Fairfax County commission tasked with ferreting out forgotten names of the Confederacy. Northern Virginia, which saw some of the biggest battles of the Civil War and for decades was an indisputable part of the South, is now one of the wealthiest regions in the country with waning ties to its Southern roots. But the counties are taking a different approach to the many side streets in the region that also carry Confederate names, both well-known and long forgotten. Fairfax is leaving it up to residents to seek a name change on those streets identified by its history commission. So far, not a single street has come forward with a petition to do so.*

[What TV and film get right about representation](#) [Brandon Tensley, *CNN*, 12 August 2021]  
[COMMENTARY]

*Too often, the television and film industries offer meager portrayals of many groups of people and systematically leave others out. For instance, according to a [new report](#) from the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, Hollywood continues to objectify female Asian American and Pacific Islander characters, as my CNN colleague Harmeet Kaur reported last week. AAPI characters don't fare much better on television. And in its [ninth annual Studio Responsibility Index report released last month](#), the media advocacy organization GLAAD noted that, despite an increase in the racial diversity of LGBTQ characters in 2020 wide release films, transgender and nonbinary characters were absent. But what do television and film get right on the representation front? Powered at least partly by streaming and the diverse backgrounds of the people behind the camera, television and film even just this year have provided meaningful portrayals of groups that have long been treated as afterthoughts. These depictions don't make up for otherwise lacking environments, but they do matter, and are worth attention.*

**DISCRIMINATION**

[New Review to Give a Second Chance at Medals of Honor for Black, Native American Vets](#)

[Stephen Losey, *Military.com*, 9 August 2021]

*The military will review some service crosses awarded to Black and Native American veterans to determine whether they should be upgraded to the Medal of Honor. The review, ordered by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin in an Aug. 2 [memo](#), will cover Black and Native American veterans of the Korean and Vietnam wars, as well as Native Americans who fought in World War II, who received a Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross or Air Force Cross. The military will study those veterans' acts of valor and decide if their actions deserve the nation's highest award for valor in combat, Austin said. The Army and Navy already have conducted similar reviews for Black veterans of WWII. The Defense Department said in a press release last week that the review will make sure those veterans, who served at a time when racial discrimination was more widespread, receive equal opportunities for their heroism to be recognized. It will not be necessary to show such discrimination occurred for a veteran to be considered for an upgrade, the press release said.*

## DIVERSITY

[Airman advocates for neurodiversity in military](#) [Tre Davis, 688th Cyberspace Wing Public Affairs, 6 August 2021]

*A passenger-filled sedan rolled violently against a dirt median, abruptly halted on its roof and blocked oncoming traffic on the interstate. Master Sgt. Shale Norwitz's duty to protect and serve took precedence. Norwitz, 5th Combat Communications Squadron noncommissioned officer in charge of Operations Planning, attributed his heroic acts to his military training and neurodiversity. "I'm on the [autism] spectrum and that makes me good at being a strategic thinker, and contributes to my innovation," Norwitz said. "This is the stuff that makes us great, but it is something we need reinforcement on." Norwitz said his neurodiversity allows him to objectively react during situations. He said because of his ability to remove emotion from a situation, he is able to see a clear series of targets, tasks and creative solutions whenever an issue arises. According to the [U.S. Air Force Medical Standards Directory](#), Autism Spectrum Disorder is not disqualifying for continued military service unless it is currently—or has a history of—compromising military duty or training. Norwitz has seen improvements in his professional development and feels empowered to reduce the negative stigmas surrounding autism. "The final step is to accept [being autistic]," Norwitz said.*

[Army Lieutenant General Gets Fourth Star and Becomes Second Female Combatant Commander in History](#) [Corey Dickstein, *Military.com*, 12 August 2021]

*Army Lt. Gen. Laura Richardson was confirmed by the Senate in a unanimous voice vote on Wednesday to become the next commander of U.S. Southern Command, which will make her just the second woman in history to lead a combatant command. Richardson, who now leads U.S. Army North, will receive a fourth star before taking command of SOUTHCOM, which oversees U.S. military operations across South and Central America and the Caribbean. She will become just the second female four-star general in the Army's history. Richardson will replace SOUTHCOM's outgoing chief, Navy Adm. Craig Faller, who has led the combatant command*

*headquartered just outside Miami since November 2018. The Defense Department has yet to set a date for the change of command, a SOUTHCOM spokesman said Thursday.*

[A diverse Corps is necessary to implement future force design, top official says](#) [Philip Athey, *Marine Corps Times*, 10 August 2021]

*The Marine Corps needs increased diversity to fully implement the force design changes required to face off against China, Russia or other potential threats, said Marine Brig. Gen. A.T. Williamson, director of manpower, plans and policy, in early August. Williamson laid out three reasons the Corps needs to be a diverse institution, which he termed the ethical, practical and operational imperatives. “The American people need to know their military... reflects those they support and defend,” Williamson said, so the “ethical imperative” is simply to do the right thing in terms of inclusion and fairness. The practical imperative, he said, refers to the Corps’ need to tap into a shrinking, but more diverse, pool of people in the country who qualify for the military. “We don’t want to leave any talent on the table,” the general said, “everyone is competing for the same talented pool of men and women. They are going to work somewhere.” But, most important is the operational imperative, he said. Today, unconscious bias may play a role in unfairly forcing good Marines to leave the Corps or denying them opportunities to improve themselves, Williamson noted.*

[FBI selects first Black woman to join a bureau SWAT team: “She has what it takes”](#) [Alaa Elassar, *CNN*, 9 August 2021]

*An FBI agent in Puerto Rico is believed to be the first Black woman to be selected to train for any of the bureau’s SWAT teams. The newly chosen agent, who has only been identified as Tai, will be undergoing New Operator Training School (NOTS), a 10-week course that prepares selectees for SWAT field operations, the FBI said in a news release. If Tai passes NOTS, she will join the San Juan Division’s SWAT team as a probationary member. Within six to 18 months, she will undergo more training to become officially certified, according to the FBI. Despite the pressure to successfully become the first Black woman on a SWAT team, Tai’s head remains focused on the first challenge: passing NOTS. The course is aimed at improving an agent’s firearm skills, body movement and critical thinking during stressful situations. A soldier in the U.S. Army Reserve, Tai said she was inspired to join the FBI after seeing the bureau’s response to the 2016 mass shooting at Pulse nightclub, a popular LGBTQ+ venue in Orlando, Florida.*

[Liberty Lake woman is West Point’s top cadet](#) [Jim Allen, *The Spokesman-Review* (Spokane, Wash.), 10 August 2021]

*As hundreds of future American Army officers marched past on Monday morning, Holland Pratt appreciated the moment. Three years ago, Pratt was one of them—a nervous freshman, or plebe, at the United States Military Academy, enduring heat, rain and the uncertainty of basic training. Now she’s about to become the top cadet at West Point. On Sunday, the senior from Liberty Lake will become the First Captain of the Corps of Cadets. She will follow in the footsteps of Douglas MacArthur, William Westmoreland and other top American generals who held the same position. Pratt becomes only the seventh woman in the two-century history of West Point to carry the mantle of First Captain. “Being named First Captain means for me an opportunity to serve others to the best of my ability and pay tribute to the legacy of those mentors and friends who*



have helped me throughout my time at the academy,” said Pratt, a 2018 graduate of Central Valley High School.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[OMB: Agency Equity Metrics a Work in Progress, Services Too Burdensome for Disadvantaged Groups](#) [Erich Wagner, *Government Executive*, 10 August 2021]

The Office of Management and Budget last week reported that agencies need to do more to ensure that their processes do not make government services inaccessible to underserved groups, as well as to continue to develop mechanisms for measuring equity. The report, prompted by President Biden’s Jan. 20 executive order promoting equity in federal programs and rescinding former President Trump’s ban on some forms of diversity and inclusion training at agencies and federal contractors, also says that agencies must expand their engagement with the public to ensure a diverse range of people may weigh in on policy decisions before they are finalized. In an [article posted to the White House’s website](#), acting OMB Director Shalanda Young said agencies need to take a hard look at the “administrative burden”—including in-person appointments, navigating complex programs and websites, and collecting and supplying eligibility documentation—that people must traverse to access a government service to ensure equal access, particularly for underserved groups.

[U.S. stock exchange sets diversity rules for listed companies](#) [BBC News, 6 August 2021]

America’s second largest stock exchange has said it will set binding gender and diversity targets for its listed companies. Firms on the Nasdaq, which include tech giants such as Apple and Tesla, will have to have at least two diverse directors, or explain why they do not. The directors should include one person who identifies as female and another as an underrepresented minority or LGBTQ+. It follows complaints about the lack of diversity in corporate America. According to a Nasdaq study last year, more than 75% of its listed companies would not have met its proposed targets. The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, which regulates financial markets, approved the plan on Friday, meaning it will be binding. Firms will also be required to release diversity statistics about their boards. “These rules will allow investors to gain a better understanding of Nasdaq-listed companies’ approach to board diversity,” SEC chair Gary Gensler said.

[This Virginia school board just passed an inclusive policy for transgender and gender-expansive students](#) [Alisha Ebrahimji, CNN, 12 August 2021]

A Virginia school board whose heated meeting in June gained national attention has voted to expand the rights of its transgender and gender-expansive students. The Loudoun County School Board voted Wednesday on a policy that allows transgender student athletes to play on teams based on their gender identity; allows transgender students to use bathrooms and locker rooms based on their gender identity; and requires teachers, faculty and staff to refer to students by their preferred names and pronouns. Additionally, all school mental health professionals in Loudoun County Public Schools are required to undergo “training on topics relating to LGBTQ+ students, including procedures for preventing and responding to bullying, harassment and discrimination based on gender identity/expression,” according to the [new policy](#). In June, a Virginia judge ruled that the district had to reinstate physical education teacher Tanner Cross,

*who was suspended after commenting at a school board meeting that he could not address transgender students by their preferred pronouns. Cross had argued that because of his Christian faith, it would be dishonest to call a child by a pronoun other than their biological sex at birth.*

[Women athletes powered Team USA’s Olympic victory](#) [Amy Bass, CNN, 8 August 2021]

[OPINION]

*Title IX is on to something. As seen by the dominant performance of the basketball team—Brittney Griner scored 30 points in the gold medal game against Japan, second only to Lisa Leslie’s 35 points in Atlanta in 1996—the performance of the American women in Tokyo might be the most commanding takeaway. In the last hours of the Games, American women put the United States over the top in the overall medal count, 113 medals to China’s 88, 39 gold medals to China’s 38. The gold medals came in places with strong winning traditions, like basketball, gymnastics and water polo, but also demonstrated tremendous depth, from volleyball’s first gold to Jennifer Valente’s win in track cycling to Nelly Korda’s victory in golf. Title IX is nearing its half century mark, and the last several Olympics have shown the fruits of its labor, with women taking the majority of U.S. medals since the London Olympics in 2012. There is, of course, much more work to be done: increased coverage of women outside of the Olympics, more women working in sports media and more respectful coverage overall, including the language used to cover female athletes (no more use of “girl” to describe anyone over the age of 18!). But there can be no denying that the attempt by Title IX to legislate equity in sports is demonstrating some significant progress.*

## **EXTREMISM**

[Army Veteran Convicted of Plotting to Bomb California Rally](#) [The Associated Press, 12 August 2021]

*An Army veteran who plotted to bomb a White supremacist rally in Southern California was convicted Wednesday of federal charges that could send him to prison for life. A jury found Mark Steven Domingo, 28, guilty of providing material support to terrorism and attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction, the U.S. attorney’s office said. He is scheduled for sentencing Nov. 1. Domingo schemed to bomb a planned April 2019 rally in Long Beach before he was arrested, prosecutors said. Domingo, a former combat infantryman, had recently converted to Islam and over several months discussed several plots to kill scores of people in Southern California in revenge for the March 2019 attacks on two New Zealand mosques that left 50 people dead, prosecutors said. Domingo posted one online message saying “America needs another Vegas event,” an apparent reference to the October 2017 mass shooting in Las Vegas that killed 59 people, documents show. He said it would spark civil unrest to weaken “America by giving them a taste of the terror they gladly spread all over the world.”*

[REPRINT]

[Husband-wife Seattle police officers fired for being at Capitol riot](#) [Meryl Kornfield, *The Washington Post*, 6 August 2021]

*After an investigation concluded that two Seattle police officers stood by the U.S. Capitol as rioters invaded the building on Jan. 6, the two lost their jobs Friday. The officers, Alexander*

*Everett and Caitlin Everett, were two of six officers from the department under investigation after attending the pro-Trump rally that proceeded to the deadly storming of the Capitol building. The married couple joins a growing number of off-duty police officers facing repercussions for attending the riot. At least 20 current or former members of law enforcement were charged relating to the Capitol mob, with officers in Texas and Virginia dismissed over the riot. Announcing his decision to fire the Everetts, interim police chief Adrian Diaz said in a [statement](#) that evidence shows the officers standing next to the Capitol within barriers established by the Capitol Police during the violent siege to disrupt certification President Biden's election. The Everetts told investigators they were 30 to 50 yards away and did not witness the assault. "It is beyond absurd to suggest that they did not know they were in an area where they should not be, amidst what was already a violent, criminal riot," Diaz said.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[A New Jersey man is facing charges after his UPS coworkers told the FBI he "gloated" and showed them videos of his time at the Capitol riot](#) [Yelena Dzhanova, *Insider*, 8 August 2021]

*A New Jersey man was arrested after his coworkers at UPS tipped off the FBI about his participation in the Capitol riot, according to [charging documents](#) from the Justice Department. Donald Smith "gloated" to his coworkers the day after the Capitol riot, the DOJ alleged, showing them videos of his participation and "bragging about it at work." The FBI on July 28 hit Smith with a slew of charges, including knowingly entering or remaining in a restricted building without authority, disorderly and disruptive conduct in a restricted building, violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds, and parading, demonstrating, or picketing in a Capitol building. Two coworkers also confirmed to the FBI that Smith hadn't attended work on January 6, the day of the riot. He told one coworker that "it was the best day of his life," according to the DOJ. The department alleged he told another colleague "he had a great time" and was one of the rioters who entered House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

## HUMAN RELATIONS

[The Pandemic Triggered Culture Change, Now HR Practices Have to Follow](#) [Howard Risher, *Government Executive*, 9 August 2021]

*What a great idea—evaluating performance, not based on interpersonal relationships, but on what employees actually produce! The recent piece in *The Atlantic*, ["Why Managers Fear a Remote-Work Future,"](#) highlighted issues that have already begun to ripple through HR best practices. Although the article was aimed at a general audience, a couple of phrases made me think the author was writing for government—"the old guard" and their "empires." That should be an issue in every organization but especially in those where people in the higher level ranks typically have long service. The old guard should be uncomfortable with what's unfolding. Almost a year ago a *Harvard Business Review* article, ["Navigating Office Politics When There Is No Office,"](#) anticipated what's emerging: "Without the office, how can I pretend to work?" The author makes a point that is fundamental to the management of performance going forward: "A virtual work environment offers much more of an opportunity to be judged on the output of your work." The article raises a related issue that agencies will need to consider in the near future with the*

*emergence of more hybrid work environments, with some employees returning to the office while others may never return. That triggers a very real possibility that organizations will develop a “two-tiered system of office politics” where those working in an office experience preferential treatment.*

## **INTERNATIONAL**

### [1,000-Year-Old Remains May Be Of A Highly Respected Nonbinary Warrior, Study Finds](#)

[Xcaret Nuñez, NPR, 9 August 2021]

*Analysis of ancient DNA found in Finland has unveiled a surprise a century later—the remains of an early medieval warrior thought to be female may have been nonbinary. The new findings challenge previous ideas about gender roles and expression and suggest that nonbinary people were valued and respected members of their communities, researchers concluded in their [study, published in the peer-reviewed European Journal of Archaeology](#). The findings are a reminder that “biology does not directly dictate a person’s self-identity,” said Ulla Moilanen, the study’s lead author and an archaeologist at Finland’s University of Turku. Archaeologists first discovered the grave in 1968. Located in Suontaka Vesitorninmäki, southern Finland, the remains were buried alongside a sword and jewelry such as brooches and found in fragments of woolen clothes—which were “a typical feminine costume of the era,” the researchers said. But the use of DNA analysis decades later found chromosomes that didn’t match what’s expected for males or females. The researchers—based in Finland and Germany—concluded that the buried person likely had Klinefelter syndrome and was anatomically male.*

### [Henley Royal Regatta dress code allows women to wear trousers](#) [BBC News, 11 August 2021]

*Women can now wear trousers at the Henley Royal Regatta everywhere after it changed its “draconian” dress code. Previously women could only wear a dress or skirt with a hemline below the knee to gain access to the Steward’s Enclosure at the annual event in Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire. For the first time in decades women can now wear trousers and trouser suits. It comes after a petition last year by University of Oxford rower Georgia Grant who called the dress code “draconian”. Ms Grant said: “It’s quite a small change, but I think for them to sort of concede on it and change something which has existed for years, that’s a huge step and it made me feel quite excited about attending the event.” She added her petition had led to transgender and disabled attendees sharing their struggles over their difficulty choosing what to wear, and that the next step should be “de-gendering” the dress requirements.*

### [Hundreds of Swiss women took to the streets after a court reduced a convicted rapist’s prison time because the assault lasted 11 minutes](#) [Vanessa Gu, Insider, 10 August 2021]

*Hundreds of Swiss protesters took to the streets of Basel on Sunday after a court reduced the sentence of a rapist last month on the grounds that the sexual assault was only 11 minutes long, and that the victim had not been severely injured, Swiss Info reported. In February 2020, a woman was raped by a 33-year-old Portuguese man and his 17-year-old companion in her apartment in Basel, northwest Switzerland, after going to a nightclub. The 33-year-old was convicted of rape in August, while the teenager is still awaiting judgment from the juvenile court. Court President Liselotte Henz opted to reduce the rapist’s sentence from four years and three*

months to three years. The defendant could be released as early as Wednesday, the Swiss media site 20 Minuten reported. Henz said the victim had been “playing with fire” and giving out “certain signals,” 20 Minuten reported. Henz was referring to the victim apparently making out with another man in the nightclub, prior to the assault, the outlet reported.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Indonesia’s Army Stops “Virginity Tests” on Female Recruits](#) [Niniek Karmini, *The Associated Press*, 12 August 2021]

Human rights groups welcomed Indonesia’s decision to stop abusive “virginity tests” on female army recruits seven years after the World Health Organization declared they had no scientific validity. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Andika Perkasa said the army will no longer subject women to invasive tests in which the inspectors used their fingers to assess whether the hymen was intact. He said applicants should only be assessed on their ability to take part in physical training and that the military would emphasize whether they have color blindness and the condition of their spines and hearts to ensure they are healthy and will not encounter life-threatening medical issues. WHO in its 2014 clinical guidelines for health care of sexually abused women said the so-called “virginity test” lacks any scientific basis. Human Rights Watch researcher Andreas Harsono called for increased pressure on Indonesia’s navy and air force commanders to end the practice as well.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Snickers pulls Spanish advert after homophobia accusations](#) [Duarte Mendonca and Amy Woodyatt, *CNN*, 7 August 2021]

Snickers in Spain has removed an advertisement and apologized for a “misunderstanding” after the film was branded homophobic. The video shows Spanish influencer Aless Gibaja ordering “a sexy orange juice with vitamins A, B and C: hugs, kisses and caresses” at a beach bar, while a friend exchanges bewildered looks with their waiter. Instead of the fruit drink, the waiter offers a Snickers ice-cream bar and, after a bite, Gibaja is transformed into a bearded man with a deep voice. Asked by the friend whether he feels better, the man replies: “Better,” before the Snickers slogan “you’re not you when you’re hungry” flashes on the screen. The State Federation of Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals tweeted Thursday that it is “shameful and regrettable” that companies continue to perpetuate stereotypes and homophobia. “If you need some training next time, we are here, #Snickers,” it added. Snickers Spain apologized for “the misunderstanding that our new advertising campaign may have caused” in a [statement](#) posted online.

[Tanzania President Samia: We’re here to show that women can lead](#) [Salim Kikeke, *BBC News*, 9 August 2021]

Tanzania’s president has said there were people who doubted she was qualified to lead when she first became head of state because she was a woman. Some “don’t believe that women can be better presidents and we are here to show them,” Samia Suluhu Hassan told the BBC. In March, the 61-year-old was sworn in after her predecessor died in office. She is currently Africa’s only female political head of state. The Ethiopian presidency is a ceremonial role. “Even some of my government workers dismissed me at first as just another woman, but they soon accepted my leadership,” she said. Ms Samia, who was promoted from the vice-presidency, advised that

*focusing on implementing development plans and prioritising people's needs was the best way to deal with critics. She added that despite challenges, other countries could learn from Liberia and Central African Republic who have had female leaders.*

## MISCELLANEOUS

[Family of man killed after police put knee to his neck sues](#) [Olga R. Rodriguez, *The Associated Press*, 10 August 2021]

*Family members of a Navy veteran who died after a Northern California police officer pressed a knee to his neck for nearly five minutes during a mental health crisis filed a federal lawsuit against the city of Antioch, its police chief and four police officers, they said Monday. The lawsuit filed by Angelo Quinto's mother and younger sister seeks unspecified monetary damages and alleges Antioch Police officers used excessive force when restraining him. It names the city, Antioch Police Chief Tammany Brooks and Officers James Perkinson, Arturo Becerra, Daniel Hopwood and Nicholas Shipilov. Quinto's family called police on Dec. 23 because the 30-year-old was going through a mental health crisis and needed help. A responding officer pressed a knee on Quinto's neck for nearly five minutes while another officer restrained his legs, [according to the complaint](#). Quinto lost consciousness and was taken by ambulance to a hospital, where he died three days later.*

[REPRINT]

[Pentagon to require COVID vaccine for all troops by Sept. 15](#) [Lolita C. Baldor, *The Associated Press*, 9 August 2021]

*The Pentagon will require members of the U.S. military to get the COVID-19 vaccine by Sept. 15, according to a [memo](#) obtained by The Associated Press. That deadline could be pushed up if the vaccine receives final FDA approval or infection rates continue to rise. "I will seek the president's approval to make the vaccines mandatory no later than mid-September, or immediately upon" licensure by the Food and Drug Administration "whichever comes first," Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin says in the memo to troops, warning them to prepare for the requirement. He added that if infection rates rise and potentially affect military readiness, "I will not hesitate to act sooner or recommend a different course to the President if I feel the need to do so. To defend this Nation, we need a healthy and ready force." The memo is expected to go out Monday. Austin said in his memo says that the military services will have the next few weeks to prepare, determine how many vaccines they need, and how this mandate will be implemented.*

[UPDATE]

[Biden to Approve Austin's Request to Make COVID-19 Vaccine Mandatory for Service Members](#) [Jim Garamone, *DOD News*, 9 August 2021]

[Vaccination form for federal workers adds penalties for lies](#) [Zeke Miller, *The Associated Press*, 6 August]

*Federal employees who need to certify their vaccination status under a new policy instituted by President Joe Biden intended to encourage COVID-19 shots will face disciplinary action and potentially criminal prosecution if they lie on the form. The Biden administration on Friday unveiled the attestation form that employees will need to fill out confirming whether they have*

*been fully vaccinated against the virus, adding legal teeth to the president's mandate. Federal employees won't be following the honor system but will instead be required to acknowledge that making a "knowing and willful false statement on this form can be punished by fine or imprisonment or both." The Associated Press obtained a copy of the form which was distributed Friday to agency leadership and points of contact for COVID safety protocol implementation.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

## MISCONDUCT

[Army Gives Colonel Facing Kidnapping and Assault Charges After Police Standoff an Honorable Discharge](#) [Steve Beynon, *Military.com*, 13 August 2021]

*A Green Beret who is facing charges of kidnapping and assault following an armed standoff with police will be honorably discharged next month, according to Army documents obtained by Military.com. While he faces civilian charges, there is no indication the service plans to pursue a court-martial. Col. Owen Ray, 47, a former commander of 1st Special Force Group, will be allowed to retire with full benefits Sept. 30 at his current rank as he faces a range of charges stemming from his Dec. 27, 2020, arrest. He was suspended from his current assignment as chief of staff for I Corps and Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington. His attorney, Jared Ausserer, told Military.com that a trial in civilian court is set for Sept. 15, and prosecutors are seeking a seven-year prison sentence. The trial will start two weeks before Ray's retirement. Ausserer said Ray has struggled with alcohol and mental health issues, adding that he has attended a chemical dependency program and post-traumatic stress treatment through the Department of Veterans Affairs since his arrest. Both were organized by military officials.*

[Georgia National Guard brigade commander suspended amid two investigations](#) [Davis Winkie, *Military Times*, 9 August 2021]

*The Georgia Army National Guard has suspended one of its brigade commanders while the state weighs the results of a toxic leadership investigation and completes a second investigation into allegations that brigade leaders retaliated against soldiers who provided statements in the first, Army Times has learned. A Georgia National Guard spokesman confirmed that Col. Brian Ellis is suspended from his duties as the commander of the state's 648th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, which is headquartered at Fort Benning, Georgia. Ellis assumed command in May 2020, [according to the Georgia National Guard's 2020 annual report](#). But the state has not suspended other key leaders in the brigade who were scrutinized in the first investigation and now face a second investigation for alleged retaliation.*

[State Guard units can't limit troops' off-duty protests by their troops, National Guard Bureau memo says](#) [Davis Winkie, *Army Times*, 7 August 2021]

*The National Guard Bureau has issued a memo instructing state Guard units to stop applying Defense Department restrictions on protest participation to Guard troops who are not on active federal orders, Army Times has learned. The July 26 memorandum, signed by Air Force Col. Kevin Mulcahy, NGB's deputy director for manpower and personnel, was filed as part of the government's response to a federal lawsuit by Army Capt. Alan Kennedy, a Colorado National Guard lawyer. Army Times obtained the memo through court records. The memo clarifies that*

[Defense Department Instruction 1325.06](#), “Handling Dissident and Protest Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces,” does not apply to National Guard troops who are not “in a Title 10 duty status under federal command and control.” The memo effectively means that the National Guard can’t restrict what protests its troops attend, save for specific and narrow circumstances.

## RACISM

[Army reviewing major’s accusation that her commander made racial insults](#) [John Vandiver, *Stars and Stripes*, 9 August 2021]

The U.S. Army in Europe confirmed that it is investigating allegations by a battalion executive officer, who says a lieutenant colonel based in Grafenwoehr made racial insults about Black people under her command. At issue is an Equal Opportunity complaint by Maj. Tiffany Mohammed, who said that while she was serving as the executive officer of the 589th Brigade Support Battalion she was called a “stupid little Black girl” by her boss during an April 16 meeting. Mohammed also said that during an October farewell dinner for a soldier in the unit, she and another soldier overheard the commander ask, “Why are Black people always late?” while awaiting the arrival of an African American service member. Mohammed is of Indian descent, but said her dark skin has caused her to be mistaken for African American. The EO complaint was found to be unsubstantiated in May by an Army investigating officer, but that decision has been appealed and is under high-level review. *Stars and Stripes* is withholding the name of the battalion commander pending the review.

[More than 9,000 anti-Asian incidents since pandemic began](#) [Terry Tang, *The Associated Press*, 12 August 2021]

The frequency of anti-Asian incidents—from taunts to outright assaults—reported in the United States so far this year seems poised to surpass last year despite months of political and social activism, according to a new report released Thursday. [Stop AAPI Hate, a national coalition that became the authority on gathering data](#) on racially motivated attacks related to the pandemic, received 9,081 incident reports between March 19, 2020, and this June. Of those, 4,548 occurred last year, and 4,533 this year. Since the coronavirus was first reported in China, people of Asian and Pacific Islander descent have been treated as scapegoats solely based on their race. “When you encourage hate, it’s not like a genie in a bottle where you can pull it out and push it back in whenever you want,” said Manjusha Kulkarni, co-founder of Stop AAPI Hate and executive director of the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council. “There’s too much perpetuating these belief systems to make them go away.” Several factors contributed to the data, from an increase in incidents to a greater desire to report, according to Kulkarni. As the economy opened up more in the past few months, it meant more public interactions and opportunities to attack, she said.

[Race on Campus: Escaping Diversity “Change Traps”](#) [Sarah Brown *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 10 August 2021]

Diversity training. Task forces. Committing to a diversity initiative, but making one office entirely responsible for it. These are what Shirley Malcom and Travis York like to call “change traps”—things colleges seem to do over and over again to try to solve their diversity problems, with



limited success. Malcom is head of education and human-resources programs at the AAAS. York is director of an association program, [Inclusive STEM Ecosystems for Equity and Diversity](#), that aims to support underrepresented groups in STEM. After years of watching colleges fall into change traps, Malcom and York have come up with a long list of them. One is dependence on a charismatic leader: A college president makes faculty diversity a top priority, but when that president leaves, the diversity commitment leaves too. Another is moving straight from awareness of a diversity problem to trying to fix it, without taking the time to understand the root causes. A department might realize there are no faculty members of color on its roster, so it recruits one senior Black professor—without reflecting on whether the department’s culture might be the problem. “Are we surprised when that person walks out the door in three years?” Malcom asks. “You think you’ve fixed something, but it isn’t fixed,” she says.

## RELIGION

[New movement of religious extremists push ultra-conservative vision in U.S.](#) [Jason Wilson, *The Guardian*, 9 August 2021]

A new group of religious extremists in the United States is seeking to promote and defend an ultra-conservative vision of Mormon belief and harass perceived opponents of those beliefs, which are often racist and bigoted or promote violence. The conduct of so-called “Deseret nationalists” or “DezNats” has raised questions about how the Mormon Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) is responding to the movement, whose members direct harassment at other Mormons, including those working in church-sponsored institutions such as Brigham Young University (BYU). Some who identify as DezNats take extreme right positions on gender, sexuality and race. Others describing themselves as Deseret nationalists have advocated for a Mormon-ruled, separatist White ethnostate, located in the Great Basin area briefly claimed by the LDS church in the mid-19th century.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Services Will Make Call on Religious Exemptions to COVID-19 Vaccines](#) [C. Todd Lopez, *DOD News*, 10 August 2021]

For service members who have religious objections to receiving a vaccine, the path for how they might seek an exception to the vaccine is defined by their individual military service’s regulations, [Pentagon Press Secretary John F. Kirby said during a meeting with the media on Tuesday](#). “There is a religious exemption possibility for any mandatory vaccine, and there’s a process that we go through to counsel the individual both from a medical and from a command perspective about using a religious exemption,” Kirby said. Counseling, he said, includes a discussion with both a medical professional and a commander about the risks of not being vaccinated as well as how not being vaccinated might affect deployability, assignments or travel. Requests for religious exemption differ by service, he said. “We take freedom of religion and worship seriously, in the military, it’s one of the things that we sign up to defend,” he said. “And so it’s something that’s done very carefully.”

[SEE ALSO]

[Pentagon to require COVID vaccine for all troops by Sept. 15](#) [Lolita C. Baldor, *The Associated Press*, 9 August 2021]

[Biden to Approve Austin’s Request to Make COVID-19 Vaccine Mandatory for Service Members](#) [Jim Garamone, *DOD News*, 9 August 2021]

[U.S. employers get religion with vaccine mandates](#) [Tom Hals, *Reuters*, 12 August 2021]

*As coronavirus infections rise again, U.S. companies mandating vaccinations are confronting an uncomfortable question rarely asked by an employer—what is an employee’s religious belief? But with each mandate comes exceptions. Employers have to make reasonable accommodations for staff who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons or refuse vaccination because of “sincerely held religious beliefs,” according to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). “It’s such a touchy subject for both sides,” said Erin McLaughlin, a Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney lawyer who advises large employers. “This issue has moved to the forefront as we see more and more mandatory vaccination policies,” she said. She said there had been more regulator guidance on exemptions for disabilities than religious beliefs, adding to the challenge as companies draft vaccine policies. The EEOC defines religion broadly to include moral and ethical beliefs and can even include opposition to receiving injections of certain chemicals, said Raeann Burgo, an attorney with Fisher Phillips, a law firm which represents companies.*

[What is the Islamic New Year? A scholar of religion explains](#) [Iqbal Akhtar, *The Conversation*, 11 August 2021]

*Much of the world today follows the Gregorian solar calendar, which has its origins in medieval Western Christianity. Conversely, the Islamic calendar or hijrī, is a lunar calendar. There are 12 months in the hijrī calendar, with each month being 29 or 30 days long. It would be over 32 to 33 years that the lunar calendar will completely cycle the solar calendar. That’s why the Islamic fasting month of Ramadan can fall in October one year, and a few years later it would be in July. It also means that the Islamic New Year is never on the same date and would also depend on the sighting of the moon. Year one of the hijrī calendar is based on the emigration of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in the year A.D. 622 to establish the first Muslim community. Despite Muhammad being from Mecca, his new faith and followers were persecuted for their beliefs. The Islamic calendar marks that beginning in Medina. Currently, while much of the world sees this as 2021, it is the Islamic year 1443, starting on Aug. 10 A.H. In Latin, A.H. means Anno Hegirae—the year of the hijra, or emigration. Unlike many traditions that celebrate the new year as a joyous occasion, the Islamic New Year is typically a somber affair.*

## SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARASSMENT

[Complicity and Silence around Sexual Harassment Are Common—Cuomo and His Protectors Were a Textbook Example](#) [Sandy Hershcovis, Ivana Vranjes, Jennifer Berdahl and Lilia M. Cortina, *Government Executive*, 12 August 2021]

*“See No Evil, Hear No Evil, Speak No Evil” is the [title of our new article for the Journal of Applied Psychology](#), which describes the role witnesses play in helping and protecting harassers. [Evidence suggests](#) that, rather than helping victims, witnesses often protect the harasser. The report on Cuomo’s sexual harassment is replete with examples that showcase how members of Cuomo’s top staff, known collectively as the “Executive Chamber,” silenced victims. One victim explained in the report: “I was terrified that if I shared what was going on that it would somehow*

get around ... and if senior aides Stephanie Benton or Melissa DeRosa heard that, I was going to lose my job.” Although #MeToo gave voice to millions of women to speak up about sexual harassment, it *remains rare* for victims to report sexual harassment to employers. They are afraid of blowback. They think management won't believe them. They fear being blamed or shamed. And these fears are warranted. *Research shows* that reporting mechanisms rarely work and often backfire.

[A Former Command Chief Sexually Harassed Airmen and Made Racist Remarks. The Air Force Moved Him to Another Leadership Post.](#) [Stephen Losey, *Military.com*, 11 August 2021]

*A former command chief who was fired from his leadership position at the 20th Fighter Wing in 2019 for creating a hostile work environment and treating airmen unprofessionally and disrespectfully is still in uniform—and now a squadron superintendent at another base. In October 2019, Chief Master Sgt. Jason Morehouse was quietly relieved of his job as the top enlisted leader at the 20th, headquartered at Shaw Air Force Base in South Carolina, after four months on the job. Later that month, an Air Force investigation substantiated allegations of sexual harassment, racist remarks, discriminatory behavior against his Black executive assistant, and dereliction of duty. Then-wing commander Col. Derek O'Malley removed Morehouse from his position in 2019 after learning of the credible allegations and issued a no-contact order between Morehouse and the seven complainants. Investigators interviewed 11 witnesses and found them all credible. The Air Force confirmed to *Military.com* that Morehouse is now serving as the squadron superintendent for the 355th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Arizona.*

[Gov. Andrew Cuomo resigns over sexual harassment allegations](#) [Marina Villeneuve, *The Associated Press*, 10 August 2021]

*Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced his resignation Tuesday over a barrage of sexual harassment allegations in a fall from grace a year after he was widely hailed nationally for his detailed daily briefings and leadership during some of the darkest days of the COVID-19 pandemic. By turns defiant and chastened, the 63-year-old Democrat emphatically denied intentionally mistreating women and called the pressure for his ouster politically motivated. But he said that fighting back in this “too hot” political climate would subject the state to months of turmoil. “The best way I can help now is if I step aside and let government get back to governing,” Cuomo said in a televised address. The decision came a week after New York’s attorney general released the results of an investigation that found Cuomo sexually harassed at least 11 women. Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul, a 62-year-old Democrat and former member of Congress from the Buffalo area, will become the state’s 57th governor and the first woman to hold the post. She said Cuomo’s resignation was “the right thing to do and in the best interest of New Yorkers.”*

[Judge Dismisses Most of Abuse Victims’ Lawsuit Against AFGE Officials](#) [Erich Wagner, *Government Executive*, 12 August 2021]

*A federal judge on Wednesday dismissed seven of the 11 claims alleged in a lawsuit brought by victims of former American Federation of Government Employees National President J. David Cox against the former union leader, the union itself and 13 other AFGE officials, citing a variety of jurisdictional and other technical issues. Last year, a dozen current and former AFGE*

employees, union members and contractors [sued](#) Cox, the union members and the union in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, accusing Cox of sexual harassment, discrimination and misuse of union funds, and accusing the union and several key leaders of not doing enough to prevent Cox's alleged misdeeds. Cox took a leave of absence, and resigned in February 2020 after additional allegations surfaced, although he continued to deny the allegations against him. In a [67-page ruling](#) District Judge John Bates dismissed all of the charges levied against individual union officials, as well as claims brought under D.C. law, preserving only the federal discrimination, harassment and misuse of funds claims against Cox and the union itself.

[Jurors find Kansas massage therapist guilty of sex crimes](#) [The Associated Press, 12 August 2021] A jury found a massage therapist guilty of sex crimes against five people, including three female soccer players at the University of Kansas. The [Lawrence Journal-World reports](#) jurors returned guilty verdicts Thursday on all eight counts against Lawrence massage therapist Shawn P. O'Brien. Three of the charges accuse O'Brien of indecent liberties with a child under the age of 14 for fondling a girl who was either 9 or 10 on three occasions between 2013 and 2015. The other five charges accuse him of sexual battery for fondling four women while giving them a massage to treat athletic-related issues between 2016 and 2019.

[“A Poison in the System”: The Epidemic of Military Sexual Assault](#) [Melinda Wenner Moyer, The New York Times Magazine, 3 August 2021]

For decades, sexual assault and harassment have festered through the ranks of the armed forces with military leaders repeatedly promising reform and then failing to live up to those promises. Women remain a distinct minority, making up only [16.5 percent](#) of the armed services, yet nearly one in four servicewomen reports experiencing sexual assault in the military, and more than half report experiencing harassment, according to a meta-analysis of 69 studies published in 2018 in the journal *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*. (Men are victims of assault and harassment, too, though at significantly lower rates than women.) One key reason troops who are assaulted rarely see justice is the way in which such crimes are investigated and prosecuted. Under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, military commanders decide whether to investigate and pursue legal action—responsibilities that in the civilian world are overseen by dedicated law enforcement.

[“Protect those they like”: 4 takeaways of a vast report the VT's National Guard's culture](#) [Ethan Bakuli, The Burlington Free Press (Burlington, Vt.), 9 August 2021]

An [extensive report into the internal culture](#) of the Vermont National Guard revealed several areas of improvement including the [organization's handling](#) of sexual misconduct cases as well as a “good old boy” network that favored certain service members over others. The outside assessment was conducted by the National Guard Bureau's Office of Complex Investigations last year and was released by the Vermont National Guard on Aug. 8. Vermont's Maj. Gen. Greg Knight, adjutant general, requested the assessment of the state's National Guard in November 2019 almost immediately after taking office to “provide an objective, in-depth analysis to identify exactly how the organization can improve”, according to a news release. The report comes years after a series of stories was published in 2018 by VTDigger.org describing [sexual misconduct and the climate toward women](#) in the Vermont National Guard.

[VA continues to struggle with military sexual assault claims: VAOIG report](#) [James R. Webb, *Military Times*, 7 August 2021]

*The Department of Veterans Affairs continues to have difficulty with the “special challenge” of processing military sexual trauma-related claims, according to a [report released Thursday](#) by the VA Office of Inspector General. Errors during claim processing, and a failure to implement recommendations from a 2018 IG report, resulted in the VA prematurely denying benefits to potentially thousands of veterans, the report found. Overall, the VA estimates roughly 57 percent of denied military sexual trauma claims were still not processed correctly, an increase from 49 percent during a similar [review in 2018](#). Thursday’s review by the VAOIG is a follow-up to an August 2018 report, which laid out six recommendations for improving the process of MST claims and reviewing previously denied claims to ensure their accuracy. Ultimately, investigators determined that the VBA did not effectively implement the recommendations, leading to continued deficiencies in claims processing.*

## SUICIDE

[American Muslims Are 2 Times More Likely To Have Attempted Suicide Than Other Groups](#) [Dalia Faheid, *NPR*, 10 August 2021]

If you or someone you know may be considering suicide, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 (En Español: 1-888-628-9454; Deaf and Hard of Hearing: 1-800-799-4889) or the Crisis Text Line by texting HOME to 741741.

*For an entire year that involved emergency room visits, legal proceedings, involuntary unemployment and the death of loved ones, Mehran Nazir struggled with a depressive episode. He would find his mind flooded with self-destructive thoughts. Eventually, Nazir found comfort in journaling. And when he shared his writings online, he quickly found that other Muslims shared his struggles. “I realized that this is not something that is unique in my history,” Nazir told NPR. “This was not a random occurrence.” Nazir was right. U.S. Muslims are two times more likely to have attempted suicide compared with other religious groups, according to a [study published last month in JAMA Psychiatry](#). Nearly 8% of Muslims in the survey reported a suicide attempt in their lifetime compared with 6% of Catholics, 5% of Protestants and 3.6% of Jewish respondents. “Anecdotally and in clinical settings, we’re definitely seeing an uptick in suicides and suicide attempts,” Dr. Rania Awaad told NPR. She’s the director of the Muslim Mental Health & Islamic Psychology Lab at Stanford University and a researcher on the study.*

## VETERANS

[Column: Brawley councilman nears end of 45-day protest hike](#) [Diane Bell, *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, 10 August 2021]

*On June 28, Ramon Castro left Friendship Park at the Tijuana border, and kept walking to draw national attention to deported military veterans. On Wednesday, he is scheduled to arrive at the eastern end of his destination near Brownsville, Texas. For 45 days, the Brawley councilman has trekked along the Mexican border, averaging five to six hours of walking a day, but sometimes as many as 15 hours. Castro recently founded the [American Veterans Homefront Initiative](#), a group that has three primary goals: stopping deportation of American veterans; letting those who have*

*been deported to return to the United States; and streamlining the process that allows immigrants serving in the military to become U.S. citizens. Has his trek accomplished its purpose? Yes and no, Castro says. From a political standpoint, Castro is quick to admit his march to bring deported veterans home has had little success. There was a flurry of excitement on July 2 when the Biden administration pledged to take steps to bring home U.S. veterans who had been unjustly deported, along with their immediate family members, and ensure they received their rightful benefits.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Congress Passes Bill to Help Vets with Mental Health Conditions Get Service Dogs](#) [Patricia Kime, *Military.com*, 10 August 2021]

*The Senate on Friday passed the Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers, or PAWS, for Veterans Therapy Act, which requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to create a pilot program for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder to train service dogs. The bill also allows—but does not require—the VA to provide service dogs to vets with mental health conditions. Having passed the House in May, the bill now goes to the president to become law. “Many veterans with mobility impairments have had their lives changed—in some cases, saved—by service dogs,” said Sen. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D., one of the bill’s cosponsors, in a statement Friday. “Our bill would expand this treatment by launching a pilot program to make veterans with mental health issues such as depression eligible to receive service dogs.” Currently, the VA covers veterinary costs of service dogs for veterans with physical disabilities, including blindness and mobility issues. The new law does not require the VA to do the same for service dogs trained for mental health support, but it does allow the department to do so if it chooses and has the funding.*

[Fed Circ upholds VA cutoff on resuming disability benefits](#) [Barbara Grzincic, *Reuters*, 9 August 2021]

*Partially disabled veterans whose benefits are suspended when they are recalled to active duty are not automatically entitled to benefits once their tours of duty end, a divided federal appeals court held. In a 2-1 decision Friday, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit upheld a Veterans Affairs regulation under which the veteran must apply for “recommencement” of benefits, with the cutoff date for any past-due benefits set at one year before the application date. The rule was challenged by former Air National Guard member Thomas Buffington, who lost three years of partial disability benefits because he applied for recommencement four years after his last tour of duty. Circuit Judge Kathleen O’Malley dissented, saying there was no gap for the regulation to fill because the “plain text of Title 38” discontinues veterans’ benefits only “during ‘any period’ of active service pay.” The VA regulation “serves no purpose other than to deny disability benefits ... solely because these men and women answered the call to return to active duty,” O’Malley wrote.*

[Support is needed for women warriors living with PTSD](#) [Jennifer Silva, *Military Times*, 6 August 2021] [COMMENTARY]

*Women service members are expanding their service in the military. Since the Defense Department opened all military roles to all service members in 2016, there have been many female “firsts” across military forces. Recently, the Navy graduated its first female Special Warfare Combatant-Craft Crewman. Women are the fastest growing cohort in the veteran community, representing just over [16 percent](#) of today’s active-duty and about [10 percent](#) of those separated. As the population*

*of women veterans grows, we learn more about the visible and invisible wounds these women experience from their time in service, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD is a prevalent condition for many veterans after military service. A June 2021 Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) special report looks at the impact of PTSD among the women veterans it serves. The report dives deeper into research findings from the [Annual Warrior Survey \(AWS\)](#). In [Women Warriors: Understanding PTSD Risk in a Rapidly Growing Population](#), WWP identifies three PTSD risk factors most prevalent among women warriors: combat experience, military sexual trauma (MST), and co-occurring mental health conditions.*