

**TESTIMONY OF
LIEUTENANT COMMANDER KIMBERLY C. YOUNG-McLEAR, Ph.D. (USCG)
CIVIL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES SUBCOMMITTEE
TRANSPORTATION AND MARITIME SECURITY SUBCOMMITTEE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

DECEMBER 11, 2019

Good Morning Chairman Raskin, Chairman Correa, Ranking Member Roy, Ranking Member Lesko, and distinguished Members of the committees and subcommittees.

Thank you for this opportunity to share to the public and Congress on the Coast Guard's handling of bullying, harassment, and retaliation allegations.

I am incredibly proud to serve in the Coast Guard alongside thousands of brave and talented individuals who go to extraordinary lengths to serve and safeguard our nation. However, if individuals serving in the Coast Guard are not safe in the workplace—whether because they are facing sexual assault, hazing, bullying, harassment, discrimination, or retaliation—then we are actively impeding our ability to fully carry out our missions. The Coast Guard's lack of accountability, transparency, and integrity with respect to these types of allegations are just some of the barriers to achieving a fully thriving workforce.

As it pertains to specific allegations I have made over the past five years, I will testify today about my experiences and the actions of several Captains, two Senior Executive Service (SES) civilians, and seven Admirals that I believe could have and should have ensured our policies and laws were followed.

I have devoted more than sixteen years serving my country in the U.S. Coast Guard. I am currently serving in a new detail at the Cybersecurity and Security Infrastructure Agency (CISA) as a visiting scholar. Prior to joining the faculty at the Coast Guard Academy, I served in a variety of rewarding assignments, including as Marine Inspector, Industrial Manager, and Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. Throughout my career, I have consistently earned the respect of shipmates at both the deck plate level and at more senior levels. In fact, it was not uncommon for Admirals and other senior Coast Guard leaders, to reach out to me directly seeking out my expertise and judgment on a range of topics from operations to workforce culture.

As you all can imagine, I was deeply humbled, honored, and excited when I was offered the opportunity to serve as a member of the Permanent Commissioned Teaching Staff to develop our next generations of leaders. Once I began teaching, however, I was subjected to degrading comments, often used as a scapegoat, and my work was

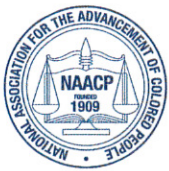
constantly undermined. The actions of every individual in my Coast Guard Academy chain of command, including by two Admirals, fostered a climate of additional abuse and isolation. That behavior eventually escalated into bullying and harassment and transformed an exciting work opportunity into a hostile work environment where I was targeted and retaliated against. By June of 2016, after enduring two years of abuse and participating in two disturbingly inadequate and humiliating investigations by the Coast Guard Academy, I was certain that what I was experiencing defied our core values, numerous policies, and potentially even laws. The more I reported the escalating abuses to the chain of command even above the Academy, the further I was targeted, harassed, and retaliated against. By March of 2017, Admiral Paul Zukunft, the former Commandant, received formal correspondence detailing years of my allegations.

As the abuses against me escalated well into 2018, I had exhausted each of the Coast Guard's civil rights and bullying complaint processes. Ultimately, the Coast Guard failed to provide a safe working environment and failed to hold those responsible accountable despite evidence of wrongdoing and knowledge of our culture. The psychological, emotional, and financial toll this has had on my wife or me cannot be overstated.

The suicide rate for active-duty U.S. military members in 2018 was the highest on record since the Department of Defense began noting these deaths in 2001. Given the alarming suicide rates in the military, I—actually, we all—have a duty to ensure our working environments, at a minimum, are safe from abuses. For these reasons and more, it is unfathomable and deeply heartbreaking that I was denied a formal written apology and an opportunity to discuss with our current Commandant, Admiral Karl Schultz, ways in which the Coast Guard can learn from my case to ensure these abuses never happen to anyone else.

Since the DHS OIG Whistleblower Retaliation report was released a year ago, many Coast Guard individuals - who are overwhelmingly talented, devoted, people of color, women, and LGBTQ - have reached out to me to share their experiences and to convey that these systemic issues up and down the ranks are not unique to the Coast Guard Academy. I would like to acknowledge the support of courageous colleagues, cadets, and community members. I would like to especially thank my wife, parents, and other family members here in attendance, all of whom are veterans.

To conclude, I would like to acknowledge the tragic loss of Congressman Elijah Cummings. He was a Civil Rights hero and one of the Coast Guard's most outspoken advocates. I sincerely hope that my testimony here today can shed light not only on some of the injustices that have occurred within the Coast Guard, but also highlight where we can improve our service culture such that we can best serve the American people.



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
NEW LONDON BRANCH**

THE NEW LONDON BRANCH NAACP UNIT 2010
P.O. BOX 987
NEW LONDON, CT 06320
Unit2010@newlondonnaacp.org

March 19, 2017

Commandant
U.S. Coast Guard
2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. SE
Washington, DC 20593-7907

Dear Admiral Paul Zukunft:

We commend the Coast Guard for its new policy on bullying and hazing in light of the 2016 Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report 16-226, DOD and Coast Guard Actions Needed to Increase Oversight and Management Information on Hazing Incidents Involving Servicemembers. As stated in your April 2016 official Coast Guard blog that when a Coastguardsman or civilian “witness bullying, hazing or harassment, every one of us must think ‘Not in my Coast Guard’ and report the behavior to the chain of command.” Additionally, from your 2016 Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement, the Coast Guard will create and sustain a climate where people of diverse backgrounds are included, valued and respected. Consistent with your 2017 Bullying and Hazing Policy and 2016 Anti-Discrimination & Anti-Harassment Policy Statement, you expect the chain of command to proactively address conduct inconsistent with Core Values and Civil Rights laws *before* it affects people and the mission. Lastly, from your 2016 Equal Opportunity Policy Statement, every single member of your Coast Guard force has the *right* to expect and *require* equal and fair treatment with dignity and respect without regard to any basis protected by law.

It has come to our attention, however, that there are allegations of bullying, harassment, and discrimination at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut. Specifically since 2014, Lieutenant Commander Kimberly Young-McLear, has been subjected to severe and pervasive bullying, harassing, and discriminatory behavior while stationed at the Coast Guard Academy because of her race, gender, sexual orientation, and engagement in Equal Opportunity activities, in addition to other differences, including earning her Ph.D. in Systems Engineering at the rank of Lieutenant. Since 2014, Lieutenant Commander Young-McLear’s work has been interfered, her performance undermined, and her professional reputation damaged. Even more alarming and as a direct result of the hostile and toxic environment, her health significantly declined, where she was placed on a temporary limited duty medical status (TLD) by the Coast Guard Academy Medical Clinic. The Coast Guard Academy senior leadership has had numerous opportunities to understand the severity of this hostile and toxic climate since as early as 2014 and to acknowledge its impact on her performance as well as to her health and others. Despite these numerous opportunities, the Coast Guard Academy Commanding Officer and senior leadership (Rear Admiral James Rendon, Rear Admiral Anthony Vogt, Dean Kurt Colella), have condoned this deeply concerning and disturbing behavior by creating an intimidating environment, dismissing her reports of bullying/harassment, and demonstrating inaction.

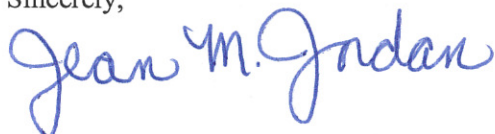
Based on our initial findings, we are deeply concerned and disturbed by the actions and inactions of the senior leadership at the Coast Guard Academy with respect to Lieutenant Commander Young-McLear’s hostile work

environment. While the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Academy has improved its commitment to diversity over recent years, cases such as Lieutenant Commander Young-McLear's underscore the importance that there is still more work which needs to be done in support of your Hazing & Bullying, Diversity & Inclusion, Equal Opportunity, and Anti-Discrimination & Anti-Harassment Policy Statements at all levels of the organization. As you are aware, bullying, hazing and harassment are behaviors that can also be indicators of a command climate in which trust is lost – trust in each other and trust in the chain of command. Furthermore, there is an abundance of resources to understand implicit bias, bullying, harassment, and discrimination which should be made available to your impartial investigator, assigned by Deputy Commandant for Mission Support (DCMS) Deputy Rear Admiral Thomas Jones, to determine the facts and findings in Lieutenant Commander Young-McLear's case.

Lieutenant Commander Young-McLear is exceptionally talented and has been a tremendous strength to the Coast Guard on many fronts. A true testament to her bravery, courage, and character, she was notably selected as your organization's recipient for both the 2016 NAACP Roy Wilkins Renown Service Award and the 2016 Commander Merle Smith Pioneer Award, all while persevering through a hostile work environment. We look forward to hearing from you soon on actions you are taking to satisfactorily and expeditiously resolve this matter. We welcome any collaboration on what we can do to help your organization achieve a Culture of Respect by eliminating bullying, harassment, and discrimination, especially as your organization is attracting more and more talented individuals of all ranks. This will greatly improve your workforce resiliency, foster higher retention, and increase mission readiness and effectiveness.

The members of the New London NAACP would like to thank you in advance for your time and interest in this very serious matter. To facilitate a favorable outcome and leverage our expertise in workplace bullying, harassment, and discrimination, the NAACP will be conducting an independent investigation and providing our findings to Rear Admiral Thomas Jones. Additionally, we would like to respectfully request an opportunity to meet with you in person - in either Washington D.C. or New London, Connecticut - to discuss a satisfactory resolution in this matter.

Sincerely,



Jean M. Jordan,
President, New London NAACP

cc: Vice Admiral Charles Michel, Vice Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard
Vice Admiral Sandra Stosz, Deputy Commandant for Mission Support (DCMS), U.S. Coast Guard
Mr. Hilary Shelton, Director, NAACP Washington Bureau
Mr. Scot Esdaile, President, Connecticut State Conference of NAACP Branches
Dr. Gary Namie, Director, Workplace Bullying Institute
The Honorable Senator Richard Blumenthal (Connecticut)
The Honorable Senator Chris Murphy (Connecticut)
The Honorable Congresswoman Judy Chu (27th District of California)
The Honorable Congressman Elijah Cummings (7th District of Maryland)
The Honorable Congressman Joe Courtney (2nd District of Connecticut)

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

**United States
Coast Guard**



Commandant
United States Coast Guard

2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave SE
Washington, DC 20593
Staff Symbol: DCMS
Phone: (202) 372-4546

24 March 2017

Jean M. Jordan
President, New London NAACP
P. O. Box 987
New London, CT 06320

Dear Ms. Jordan,

On behalf of the Commandant, I am responding to your letter dated March 19, 2017, expressing concerns regarding allegations of bullying, harassment and discrimination at the U. S. Coast Guard Academy. I assure you that all Coast Guard members are guided by our Service's Core Values of Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty and are committed to a workplace free of discrimination and harassment. All complaints are taken seriously, thoroughly reviewed and investigated through a process overseen by the Coast Guard's Civil Rights Directorate and based on a foundation of federal statutes and regulations.

We take seriously the allegations raised in your letter. Like other federal agencies, the Coast Guard is subject to regulatory processes that ensure we respond appropriately to complaints of harassment and discrimination, and we act accordingly in every case. While I appreciate your offer to conduct an investigation, the Coast Guard must follow prescribed federal processes that include thorough and impartial investigations that protect members' privacy.

The Coast Guard and our Academy value our relationship with the NAACP and always welcome interaction with the New London branch. I am open to meeting with you; however, please know that due to privacy rights, I am unable to discuss or disclose specifics or outcomes regarding the allegations you present.

My staff point of contact is Captain John Barresi, who can be reached at (202) 372-4546.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sandra L. Stosz".

Sandra L. Stosz
Vice Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard
Deputy Commandant for Mission Support

Coast Guard Commandant Gives 'Full Attention' to Race Bias Allegations at Academy



Adm. Karl Schultz speaks during a change of command ceremony at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C., June 1, 2018 (U.S. Coast Guard/Petty Officer 1st Class Patrick Kelley)

6 Dec 2018

Military.com | By [Richard Sisk](#)

[Coast Guard](#) Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz said Thursday he would convene a senior leadership meeting early next week to address [allegations of race and gender bias](#) against a faculty member at the Coast Guard Academy in [New London](#), Connecticut.

"This has my full attention. I will get very familiar with it," Schultz said of the allegations in a Department of Homeland Security Inspector General report that a female faculty member, a lieutenant commander, was retaliated against for alleging that her superiors engaged in race and gender discrimination.

"We're going to dive into that," Schultz said of the IG report. "We're going to see some actions, what actions we can take, some recommendations. I'm absolutely committed to an environment where all employees feel valued."

Schultz said he had only seen a redacted version of the IG report but gave his "personal commitment that we will be accountable and responsive" in dealing with the matter. He added that he wanted to "understand the allegations of bullying, harassment" against the woman, who reported a hostile work environment at the school. "We take that very seriously. We want to protect the rights of whistleblowers."

Related Topics

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Congressman Joe Courtney To Host Lieutenant Commander Kimberly Young-McLear, Ph.D., Whistleblower And Workplace Bullying Survivor, As His State Of The Union Guest

February 4, 2019 | Press Release



WASHINGTON – Today, Congressman Joe Courtney (CT-02) announced that he will host Lieutenant Commander Kimberly Young-McLear, Ph.D. of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy as his guest of honor for President Trump’s State of the Union Address on Tuesday, February 5th. LCDR Young-McLear, who identifies as black and lesbian, currently serves as a permanent military faculty member in the Electrical Engineering and Cyber Systems Section in the U.S. Coast Guard Academy’s Engineering Department.

According to a Department of Homeland Security Office of the Inspector General report on December 4, 2018, Young-McLear suffered retaliation after she made complaints about being the target of workplace bullying for years while teaching at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. In addition, as a faculty member during the 35-day government shutdown in a Coast Guard facility, she diligently reported to work as an excepted employee despite missing a paycheck along with other faculty.

“It is unacceptable that talented and compassionate individuals like Kimberly are subjected to toxic and hostile work environments while serving their country,”

Congressman Courtney said. “Moreover, our military service members and civilian employees must have the confidence that when they report workplace bullying and other forms of harassment or discrimination, they will not be subjected to retaliation. I thank Kimberly for her moral courage, integrity, and devotion to duty as a Coast Guardsman.”

During her career in the Coast Guard, Young-McLear has sought opportunities to leverage her STEM background to bring new innovations to the Coast Guard and the New London community. LCDR Young-McLear and her team were selected as the recipient of the 2017 Coast Guard Capt. Niels P. Thomsen Innovation Award for Cultural Change for their research in leveraging social media for large-scale disaster response during Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. As Chair of the Academy’s Cyber Council, she leads a multidisciplinary team of faculty to advance cyber curricula and research and helped develop the Academy’s cyber systems undergraduate major. Drawing upon her previous experience as Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security as well as her naval engineering and marine safety tours of duty, her post-doctoral research focuses on protecting critical infrastructure from cyber threats in the maritime domain. She also developed NET21, an innovative middle school outreach program in the New London area designed to systematically close STEM gaps amongst underrepresented students in the field of cybersecurity.

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Secretary

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528



**Homeland
Security**

February 22, 2019

MEMORANDUM FOR: ADMIRAL KARL L. SCHULTZ
COMMANDANT, UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

FROM: KIRSTJEN M. NIELSEN
SECRETARY

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kirstjen Nielsen".

SUBJECT: DIRECTED ACTION ON DHS OIG WHISTLEBLOWER
RETALIATION REPORT OF INVESTIGATION
CASE #W17-USCG-WPU-16018

- 1) On December 6, 2018, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) published a Whistleblower Retaliation Report of Investigation for Case #W17-USCG-WPU-16018. Pursuant to the Military Whistleblower Protection Act, 10 U.S.C. § 1034, I am required to determine whether corrective or disciplinary action should be taken. The report is enclosed for your consideration.
- 2) The OIG found that the Coast Guard retaliated against a Lieutenant Commander in an officer evaluation report (OER) dated May 31, 2016. Although only one instance of retaliation was substantiated, the OIG identified several other concerns related to the Coast Guard's policy on investigating, handling and documenting harassment, discrimination and bullying claims as well as gaps in training related to that policy. The OIG made the following recommendations:
 - a) Order such action as is necessary to correct Complainant's Officer Evaluation Report for the period of June 1, 2015, to May 31, 2016, by correcting marks of five to at least marks of six;
 - b) Direct the Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard to require that commanders document in writing the reasons for their findings and outcomes in response to bullying and harassment complaints;
 - c) Require supplemental training for U.S. Coast Guard supervisors and managers on the agency's discrimination, harassment, and bullying policies, including on how to respond to receipt of an allegation and the importance in exercising discretion in communicating about ongoing complaints; and
 - d) Direct that the U.S. Coast Guard Civil Rights Manual, COMDTINST M5350.4C, be modified to clarify that military members who believe they were subject to whistleblower retaliation should file a complaint with DHS OIG, not the U.S. Office of Special Counsel.

- 3) I have determined that corrective action is warranted. As a result, I am referring all recommendations to you with direction to order or implement all corrective actions as recommended by the OIG. The correction of the Complainant's Officer Evaluation Report shall be initiated immediately and completed within two weeks of receipt of complainant's input. All other actions shall be completed within six months of this memorandum. I further direct that you provide me with written documentation of such corrective actions upon implementation or completion.

- 4) This direction does not preclude you from taking other actions within your authority as you determine necessary.


Coast Guard Academy whistleblower speaks up on discrimination, retaliation



Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Kimberly Young-McLear, who has decided to publicly share her experience of workplace bullying at the Coast Guard Academy in the hopes it will help others going through a similar situation. (Coast Guard PA2 Lauren Laughlin)

Published July 27, 2019 5:10PM | Updated July 28, 2019 8:46PM

By **Julia Bergman** (/apps/pbcs.dll/personalia?ID=j.bergman) Day staff writer

✉ j.bergman@theday.com (mailto:j.bergman@theday.com)  JuliaSBergman
(<http://www.twitter.com/JuliaSBergman>)

Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Kimberly Young-McLear, who spent years reporting bullying and harassing behaviors by her superiors, and later faced retaliation for making those complaints, is finally speaking publicly about what happened to her.

The 35-year-old said she chose now to speak out because she will be recognized, along with 50 others, by the National Whistleblowers Center on Tuesday, July 30, designated as **National Whistleblower Appreciation Day** (<https://www.whistleblowers.org/news/celebrate-national-whistleblower-appreciation-day/>).

"I want to use this public opportunity to affirm the dignity of victims and their families while still advocating for honest, efficient and accountable workplace environments in the military," she said.

Young-McLear cited the cases of Marine Corps Lance Corporal Harry Lew and Army Private Danny Chen, who died by suicide after enduring military hazing. Lew's aunt, U.S. Rep. Judy Chu, D-Calif., has advocated in Congress for reforming the way the military deals with hazing.

"They didn't survive harassment and therefore cannot tell their stories or serve," Young-McLear said.

Young-McLear says she endured four years of abuse at the academy, including her supervisor making belittling comments toward her, using her as a scapegoat and undermining her work. She said she exhausted the complaint process, making reports to her Coast Guard chain of command, including senior leadership at the academy and the commandant, and through the Coast Guard and Department of Homeland Security's civil rights reporting processes.

"They all failed me. The reporting systems that we have in place failed and I was retaliated against," said Young-McLear, who left the academy this summer for a cybersecurity fellowship under the Department of Homeland Security.

A **2018 report** (<https://www.theday.com/local-news/20181204/report-coast-guard-academy-retaliated-after-complaint>) from the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General found that Young-McLear, who is black and lesbian, received low marks on an evaluation performance report after making the complaints. The report covers the period from July 2015 through April 2018, and involved an extensive review of documentary evidence and personnel interviews.

Capt. Tony Russell, chief of the Coast Guard's Office of Public Affairs, said in a phone interview Friday that the Coast Guard "accepts and embraces" the findings in the inspector general report, and has used it to "remedy any identified wrongs of the past and to make changes for improved performance going forward."

Young-McLear became a member of the permanent commissioned teaching staff at the academy in 2014. She filed several complaints over the years, alleging harassment and a hostile work environment by her boss — the head of the management department, a white male — based in part on race, gender and sexual orientation. The inspector general report indicates her complaints were mishandled by academy and Coast Guard officials.

She was told by the officials convening the investigations into her complaints that her allegations were unsubstantiated. However, the findings of the investigators were much more nuanced. The investigator who performed a preliminary inquiry, the least formal investigative process, into her first complaint filed in July 2015 said it "did not afford sufficient detail or depth to fairly conclude whether or not prohibited harassment has occurred." The investigator recommended an investigation be carried out by someone credentialed in human resources, equal employment opportunity, civil rights matters and/or diversity and inclusion.

Two Coast Guard admirals who handled an investigation into her complaints also found her claims to be unsubstantiated. The investigator, on the other hand, said that while the evidence "failed to reveal blatant acts of discrimination or bullying," when reviewed as a whole, it "creates a picture of offensive conduct towards [Complainant] that is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive."

After Young-McLear's complaints, the department head went on to bully another member of the academy.

That complainant, a white female civilian employee, alleged harassment and bullying behavior by the department head during and immediately after mandatory bullying and hazing training at the academy in January 2018. The admiral who substantiated her claims, Rear Admiral Joseph Vojvodich, also handled an investigation into Young-McLear's complaints, which were found to be unsubstantiated.

The **academy removed** (<https://www.theday.com/military-news/20180530/coast-guard-academy-removes-department-head-after-bullying-investigation>) the department head several months after the complaint was filed, on April 24, 2018, citing "a loss of confidence in his ability to effectively lead the department."

Young-McLear said the head of the Coast Guard declined to meet with her to discuss what she experienced, and also declined to provide her with "a formal written apology on behalf of the Coast Guard."

To add to that, she said, the Coast Guard "has never held anyone accountable for the years of abuse I sustained."

Russell, the Coast Guard public affairs chief, declined to talk about individual personnel actions but said the superintendent of the academy made a public apology with the complainant present in January. In February, the vice commandant met with the complainant and also apologized to her publicly during a meeting of all faculty to discuss the report. In March, the commandant apologized to her in front of the academy and Corps of Cadets, Russell said.

Following the release of the inspector general report, members of Congress, including U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney, D-2nd District, asked the Coast Guard to **turn over documents** (<https://www.theday.com/military-news/20190411/coast-guard-delivers-documents-on-harassment-bullying-claims-at-academy>) related to its handling of bullying and harassment complaints. Congressional staffers are in the process of reviewing more than a thousand pages of documents that the Coast Guard provided.

Russell highlighted some of the action taken by the Coast Guard **in response** (<https://www.theday.com/military-news/20181205/coast-guard-academy-responds-to-ig-finding-of-retaliation>) to the inspector general report, including requiring commanders to provide written justifications for their findings and outcomes in response to bullying and harassment complaints. The Coast Guard also revised its civil rights manual to clarify that whistleblower retaliation complaints should be filed with the DHS inspector general. The manual now also explicitly states that "management officials may not use their authority to take or threaten action against a civilian employee, candidate for civilian employment or a military member for making protected communications to a member of Congress, the inspector general and others."

Additionally, all Coast Guard personnel were required to undergo training on preventing and addressing workplace harassment. The training, however, did not cover workplace bullying. Russell said the Coast Guard was at an 85 percent completion rate with the training. He expects the remaining 15 percent to complete the training by the end of the summer.

j.bergman@theday.com (<mailto:j.bergman@theday.com>)

Editor's Note: *This article has been edited to include information on apologies made to the complainant.*

Prevalence of workplace bullying

Catherine Mattice Zundel, the founder and CEO of Civility Partners, who conducted a bullying and hazing training at the Coast Guard Academy in early 2018, said academic research on the topic of bullying goes back 40 years.

Research shows that bullying happens to between 30 percent and 80 percent of the population at some point in their lives, depending on the industry in which someone works, the country in which someone works and other factors, she said. A 2017 **survey**

(<https://www.workplacebullying.org/wbiresearch/wbi-2017-survey/>) from the Workplace Bullying Institute found that 60.4 million Americans are affected by workplace bullying and that 61 percent of bullies are bosses.

Research also has pointed to the effects that bullying can have on a person's mental health.

"They have found that people who are bullied at work experience stress, anxiety, depression, are more likely to take painkillers or other medications, and are more likely to think of suicide," Mattice Zundel said.

Psychological problems can lead to physical problems, such as irritable bowel syndrome, heart disease and headaches, she said.

For access to free resources on workplace bullying, visit bit.ly/BullyingRsrc (<http://bit.ly/BullyingRsrc>).

Commenting is closed. Comment threads are monitored for 72 hours after publication and then closed.

READER COMMENTS

Alexander Waid 4 months ago

[Report](#)

LCDR Young-McLear, Ph.D. is a hero to me and to many of us. Her bravery and perseverance in working to get the truth to come out are inspiring. In spite of years of harassment and bullying and retaliation, she persisted. I was present at the January meeting referred to in the article, but there was no apology to her. I recall the Superintendent apologizing broadly for what was in the news, for how some people might be feeling, for what people were hearing in the community, but there was no apology to Dr./LCDR Young-McLear for his role in what she suffered. Quite the contrary, the Superintendent referred to "the doggone OIG report" in his comments. It was a low moment to hear the anger aimed at the public reporting of bullying, not at the bullying that happened and hurt one of our shipmates. Lcdr Young-McLear was in the audience that day and those comments caused further hurt and damage. I saw her and I talked to her after. Kudos to her for working to give a voice to so many who have been silenced, marginalized and oppressed. Coming out after being a victim of abuse and a target of bullying is among the bravest acts and she is to be commended for it. I am

Kris Wraight 4 months ago

[Report](#)

Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Kimberly Young-McLear is a local hero in my eyes. She is the epitome of integrity in speaking truth to power.

Admiral Schultz should have met with her immediately after the report came out in December. Period. The fact that it is seven months later and he hasn't provided her a formal written apology is totally unacceptable and sets a dangerous tone that bullying, harassment, and retaliation are completely tolerated across the service.

But this is about more than the individuals who abuse their power, it's about the systems that create them. Racism, sexism, homophobia, and white supremacy were built into the foundation of institutions like the Coast Guard, as well as every branch of the military.

Holding individuals accountable for their abuse of power is critical, but real culture change is going to require the Coast Guard to face its historically oppressive roots.

As for the training being provided? Is this just for show? It doesn't even include a focus on bullying! No accountability, no written apology, and no direct training on bullying? Lt. Cmdr. Young-McLear endured four years of abuse and the law was broken. She deserves better. And so do we.

Joshua MCKIBBEN 4 months ago

Report

As a former employee who worked at the coast guard acadmey. I can say I suffered retaliation for filing an eeo complaint. I can understand her story much better having gone through it myself. I was terminated only a short while after filling it.

Aimee Allaire 4 months ago

Report

From the article and reading the OIG report, Admiral Zukunft and Admiral Stosz were briefed on the allegations of harassment since 2016. They were the Commandant and the highest ranking female 3 star Admiral in the Coast Guard. Then she also used the CG and DHS Civil Rights Processes. So in other words, thats a lot of Admirals who had knowledge of her allegations of abuse. At least 7 Admirals by my count. Why hasnt anyone been held accountability? The law (Military Whistleblower Protection Act) was broken. Numerous policies were violated. Is Admiral Schultz really saying in March he apologized? Thats at least three months after the OIG report was released. He needs to give this patriot a written formal apology. Thats the least he can do!

George Blahun 4 months ago

Report

Dan:

Did you read what you wrote before hitting post? If she was "singled out" then the treatment for plebes was not universal. Furthermore, the Academy has a recent less than stellar history with this type of harassment. I have no axe to grind with the USCGA, I spent most of the first 22 years of my life on the grounds there. I'd like to see this type of harassment banished for everyone there.

Amelia Lord 4 months ago

Report

<https://livestream.com/CGA/2019CommandantsAddress>

Amelia Lord 4 months ago

Report

Based on the reports Ive heard from several people I know who work at the Academy, theyve said with full certainty that the Commandant did NOT apologize in March. He was there for a leadership address and did not address the climate or bullying or OIG report, not once. Please click on the link to watch the live feed of the address. It was only during the Q&A -after the formal address- that he responded to a question on bullying throughout the service. The people I know say that his comments caused survivors (cadets and staff) a lot of pain because he neglected to acknowledge the abuse and apologies when he had the opportunity. Instead he talked about statistics of how many female cadets are enrolled at CGA and mentioned generic information about upcoming training for the service.

Dan McCarthy 4 months ago

[Report](#)

I am not offering this comment as anything against this officer but simply to note that all accusations have 2 sides. I see no effort by the Day writer to present the other side. I also wonder how this officer survived plebe summer where I am sure she was singled out as all plebes are as they are introduced to the military.

13 years on so of active duty and along the way receiving a PhD and promotion to Lt Cmdr might make one wonder how the service would invest so much in her if they were singling her out for retaliation based on her claims.

Regardless, as but 1 officer out of thousands who has required Captains and Admirals to intervene and evidently failed and now to involve Congressional support one might begin to wonder if the dollars and time spend trying to get at the root causes only to wind up in public apologies and mandatory training could have been avoided but it sounds like for every course correction another event occurred?

Celeste Brown 4 months ago

[Report](#)

We need more people in our military that have the character of Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Kimberly Young-McLear.

Lisa crowley 4 months ago

[Report](#)

If it weren't for brave people like Young-McLear, literally nothing would ever change. Now it's up to the CG to do more than pay lip service. I'd be curious to know what that process is going to look like; "trainings", while all well and good, are not enough to change culture. That takes champions.

Rain Daugherty 4 months ago

[Report](#)

Dr and LCDR Young-McLear, thank you for your courage and determination to serve and to leave the service better than you found it. You have given our country more than words can express.

New London is proud to be Connecticut's Coast Guard City and doubly so to have you among the ranks.

Much respect, Rain Daugherty

Val Kelly 4 months ago

[Report](#)

Lt. Cmdr. Young-McLear, thank you for being part of the solution. Not enough people stand up for the abused, no matter what form that abuse takes, as is evidenced by what is happening at the CGA and the school systems of Stonington and New London. I wish more people had the courage and morals to stand up for those with weaker voices.

Carolyn Patierno 4 months ago

[Report](#)

Young-McLear is a courageous woman who cares deeply for the CGA as well as the wider community. Im grateful for her example and the many ways she contributes to the greater good.

Michael Satti 4 months ago

[Report](#)

It takes true grit to risk the retaliation one suffers to right this ship! There seems to be a cloud of intolerance at the Academy that can only come from the top or pure indifference to the laws which prohibit invidious discrimination. Kudos to this strong woman and strength is only one of the traits that a whistleblower must possess. Perseverance is another! She clearly has both!

Mirna martinez 4 months ago

[Report](#)

Dr. Young-McLear, to be persecuted while keeping on track to fulfill your duty as well as contributing to various organizations and causes in the community is impressive. But then, layer that on to taking-on the US Coast Guard to make sure that justice is served; you are admirable! Thank you for your leadership!

4 months ago

[Report](#)

I am so proud of Dr. Young-McLear and her stalwart commitment to selfless service and establishing space for the marginalized to have a voice and agency. Through you, we have broken through the decades of silence. We will be a better service when we have accountability so members can begin to build trust in leadership to create true psychological safety. BZ LCDR Young-McLear. You have set us on the right path; you are an exemplary officer and colleague!

CDR R. W. James, Ph.D., PCTS, USCGA

David Isola 4 months ago

[Report](#)

Our wonderful country, the US of A, has benefited all its citizens by recognizing the inherent value of individual people no matter what color, faith, origin or handicap. I challenge everyone to come up with a period in our history when racist, hate-fueled, cliquish, exclusionary attitudes have helped our nation as a whole.

Kimberly Young-McLear 5 months ago

[Report](#)

I had a moral obligation to do my best to improve the culture and systems within the Coast Guard. I do not want anyone else to suffer. Thank you to my wife, family, friends, and colleagues in New London and beyond for the outpouring of support and for always being there for me. I continue stand with all survivors and their families across our military community. If you know of anyone who is being bullied in schools or at work or at home, please do not be a bystander. Intervene. Your actions just might save a life.

LCDR Kimberly Young-McLear, Ph.D.

Derek Watkins 5 months ago

[Report](#)

It is not just a CG problem it happens in every service and at many workplaces in this state.

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