

**Written Testimony of
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**Before the House Committee on Natural Resources,
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations**

**Sexual Harassment at the
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**February 27, 2020
2:00 PM**

My name is Patrick Carroll. I started observing in 2000 with the North Pacific Observer Program where I worked for 5 years on a seasonal basis, completing some 550 days of deployment at sea. In 2006, I went to work for the Southeast Observer program at the Galveston Laboratory. I stayed with the latter until my unfair termination in 2018, after completing over 1000 days at sea.

The difference between these programs were significant. I found the North Pacific program to be efficiently run with consideration and thanks given to observers for their work, they also used technology to incorporate observer data rapidly into their database as well as check the raw submitted observer data for errors and discrepancies. Observer provider subcontractors supplied observers to this program but not coordinators or other office personnel. I was extremely satisfied with my experience with the North Pacific Observer program, both in the way I was treated, with respect and thanks, and trained. I was also impressed with the efficiency of the program itself, both in how raw data was handled and how we were trained.

My experience with the North Pacific Observer Program stands in extreme contrast to what I experienced in the Southeast Reef and Shrimp Observer program. My initial training with this program occurred in June of 2006, The safety portion of the training was very similar to what I experienced in The Northwest program, but the similarity ended with the protocol training which left much basic information unexplained, as well as their use of paper documents and total lack of digital interface between the raw data and ensuing corrections. What was also interesting in this initial training was a statement by a [REDACTED], who was subcontracted then and later hired as a federal coordinator in the Galveston office, that "we could be fired at any time and for any reason" because "Texas was a right to work state". At the time of my initial training in 2006, both of the observer coordinators in the Galveston office were subcontracted employees of [REDACTED]. Approximately 4 years later this was determined to be a conflict of interest, and they were hired as federal employees, with another subcontracted coordinator who had been hired in the interim. Approximately 3 years later more coordinators were found to be needed in the office, and were hired as subcontractors, in direct opposition to the determination that this was a conflict of interest.

I unfortunately ran into a problem with one of the subcontracted coordinators, who felt that he could “do whatever he wanted” as to the grading of our submitted trip reports. I complained to my subcontractor manager who spoke to this employee as well as the other subcontracted coordinators, and told them that they could not do whatever they wanted. Soon after this minor complaint against a specific individual, I began to be harassed by both the subcontracted as well as the federal coordinators, in retaliation for my complaint against a single individual. This harassment included increased scrutiny of my performance, arbitrary decisions against me, **ostracized** at social function, and ultimately violation of my civil rights, based on my age, which apparently they were entirely unaware of, as they in their ardor to punish the squeaky wheel never investigated or considered.

I made my subcontracted manager aware of this situation, to which she was initially commiserate, but then became accusatory to me. This change in her demeanor I can only attribute to her unwillingness to censure coordinators, thereby making the contracting company look irresponsible by placing these people in positions of power which they abused. I can not tell you how bad it feels to be fired by a manager for insubordination, when 2 weeks before the same manager told you that you were a good employee who produced good work, after 12 years of dedicated service in more than trying circumstances. I and all observers deserve better than this treatment. Observers risk their lives to collect this data which is vital to fisheries management in the United States, yet they are subcontracted and subjected to the whims and circumstances of competitive bidding, non standardized programs and personnel management practices of the lowest bidders. This does not happen with the armed forces, with whom observers are similar in that they risk their lives to a certain degree in the best interest of the nations resources. Commercial fishing is consistently ranked the most dangerous job in the country, the observers who risk their lives providing the data for fisheries management should be treated with respect and program continuity and integrity which is beyond the self interest of sub contracted observer provider companies. Please remember that no one has considered subcontracting the US Coast Guard, Navy or Marines, observers deserve the same respect and guarantees.