THE STATE of ALASKA
GOVERNOR SEAN PARNELL

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

Office of the Commissioner

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MEMO

TO: Alaska National Guard (AKNG) and Department of Military & Veterans Affairs (DMVA) Employees and Members

FROM: Mike "Leon" Bridges
Brigadier General, AKARNG
Acting Commissioner/Adjutant General

DATE: November 1, 2014

SUBJECT: Diversity & Inclusion as a Leadership Strategy

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1. Diversity & Inclusion is a leadership strategy and I expect all leaders in our state to leverage the unique qualities of all agency personnel, both military and civilian, to achieve and maintain an inclusive environment to meet or exceed mission requirements.

2. Diversity & Inclusion in the workplace results in a wider range of views and experiences. There is no room in the workplace for stereotypes, because stereotypes ignore differences among the individuals in a group. The overall impact of changing workforce demographics is that organization, if it is to prosper, must prepare to deal with diverse cultural values brought to the workplace.

3. The first tool essential to managing diversity is to form a common ground or shared set of assumptions within which to communicate.

4. Next, we must acknowledge the differences. People are different and there is no way to make them fit into a single mold; nor is there any reason to. To effectively manage a diverse workforce, we must acknowledge the differences and agree to respect or at least accept those differences.

5. Finally, we should use everyone's experience and background as a resource. Diversity of experience and background means diverse ways of looking at issues and problems. Effective management of all human resources (accessions, recruitment, mentorship, performance feedback, annual performance evaluations, recognition, promotion, retention, separations, and retirement) can result in higher productivity, survival in highly competitive environment, improved performance, creativity and innovation, and reduced turnover and absenteeism. Placing emphasis on diversity without threatening our unity is the proper way to strengthen the ties that bind us together. Communication, sensitivity, mutual respect, equal opportunity and common trust are the primary ingredients of social cohesiveness.

6. The goal of diversity is to create a workplace where all personnel – regardless of their diverse

backgrounds, age, race, gender, religion, or disability – feel appreciated and get along with each other to maximize mission effectiveness. Managing diversity is an intelligent management practice and is essential for the continued growth of our organization.

7. Point of contact for this policy is the Joint Diversity Executive Committee (JDEC). Send any questions, concerns or suggestions for the JDEC to nanette.s.martinez.mil@mail.mil. If one of the committee members is not able to address an issue, it will be placed on the JDEC agenda to be addressed at the next scheduled JDEC meeting. If for any reason you do not wish to send an email, please contact Maj Nanette Martinez at 907-428-6085.

8. Any questions or concerns regarding this policy may be directed to the State Equal Employment Manager's office at (907) 428-6466, room E201, Joint Forces Headquarters, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.