

DEOMI NEWS LINKS 19 MAY 2023

HIGHLIGHTS

[2 Air Force leaders on breaking barriers and inspiring positive change](#) [Norah O'Donnell, CBS News, 17 May 2023] [VIDEO]

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Charles Q. Brown, Jr. and Chief Master Sergeant JoAnne Bass are both firsts in their roles. Norah O'Donnell sat down with them to learn about the challenges that they face.

[The importance of religion in the lives of Americans is shrinking](#) [Jason DeRose, NPR, 16 May 2023]

The importance of religion in the lives of Americans is on the decline. However, for people who do still attend religious services, they say they're optimistic about the future of their house of worship. Those are among the findings of a [new report](#) from the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI). Just 16% of Americans surveyed said religion is the most important thing in their lives, according to the PRRI study, down from 20% a decade ago.

[A look at the history of racism in America and its role in today's divisions](#) [Judy Woodruff and Frank Carlson, PBS News, 3 May 2023]

The fact that our country is divided isn't new. In many respects, it can be traced back to the founding of a nation on the promise of freedom while dependent on slavery, a time when many couldn't participate in the democracy being created. Judy Woodruff examines how that founding contradiction has evolved and what it means for our challenges today. It's part of her series, "America at a Crossroads."

[MLB to honor service members during "Armed Forces Day" Weekend](#) [MLB News, 19 May 2023]

Major League Baseball and its clubs will demonstrate the sport's appreciation of military service men, women, and their families this weekend in commemoration of Armed Forces Day. Through the MLB Together platform, Baseball will celebrate service members, veterans, and military families in ballparks, through charitable giving and continuing several partnership activations in order to build greater connection and commitment to the cause.

[\[PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION\]](#)

[Navy Releases findings from Investigation into Command Climate and Sailor Quality of Service onboard USS George Washington](#) [Navy News Service, 18 May 2023]

U.S. Fleet Forces Command (USFFC) released its investigation into command quality of life and quality of work, jointly referred to as "Quality of Service (QoS)," onboard USS George Washington (CVN 73) May 18. The investigation examined the service challenges unique to aircraft carriers undergoing midlife refueling and complex overhaul (RCOH) in a shipyard environment. As the investigating team identified opportunities to improve Sailor QoS, USFFC took immediate action to rectify deficiencies in the short term and outline corrective measures for the long term. To provide clear targets, Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro and Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michael Gilday released a memo titled [Setting a New Course for Navy Quality of Service](#) May 15 to provide Commanders' Intent and directly address the identified areas from the investigation.

[\[FULL REPORT - REDACTED\]](#)

CULTURE

[Asian Americans are over just being included—they're defining mainstream culture](#) [Brahmjot Kaur and Angela Yang, *NBC News*, 12 May 2023]

A proliferation of movies and television shows in recent years has made it clear Asian Americans are no longer chasing the opportunity to merely be included. Instead, diaspora storytellers are increasingly defining mainstream culture while creating their own spaces on their own terms—without feeling the need to contextualize their stories for the masses. From “Everything Everywhere All at Once” to “Ms. Marvel” to this year’s “Joy Ride,” recent Asian American films have increasingly tackled the diaspora experience. Films made for mainstream audiences are no longer shying away from putting the cultural nuances of diaspora characters on full display.

[Austin talks equality and service in commencement speech](#) [Nicholas Slayton, *Task & Purpose*, 14 May 2023]

Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin got personal this weekend, discussing his own experience growing up in a segregated United States and how the military’s integration opened doors for him. Austin delivered the commencement address on Saturday at Fayetteville State University in North Carolina, a historically Black college. The commencement speech was also a moment for the Secretary of Defense to discuss racial equality and particularly inclusion in the military. This year marks the 75th anniversary of President Harry S. Truman’s order to desegregate the armed forces. Austin cited that, saying “that didn’t break down every barrier. But it did open new horizons for Black Americans.”

[Defense Department schools adopts new gender-neutral dress code](#) [Jennifer H. Svan, *Stars and Stripes*, 18 May 2023]

The Department of Defense Education Activity has approved a new gender-neutral student dress code that goes into effect July 1 at all 160 DODEA schools in the Pacific, Europe and Americas regions, including Puerto Rico and Cuba. The policy doesn’t include language that focuses on one gender exclusively or single out styles of dress specific to a race or religion, said Joy Medley, a DODEA education specialist. The [updated guidelines](#) posted on DODEA’s website simply call for “tops with sleeves” and “solid clothing (not transparent or translucent) that fully covers the top and bottom, from armpit to mid-thigh.” Across the United States, stories of dress code issues have drawn national attention, as schools battle with parents, students and civil rights advocates on the fairness of the standards and the disciplinary measures enforcing them.

[Effective June 1, First Term Airmen can retrain into AFSCs under 90% manning in lieu of separation](#) [Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs, *Air Force News Service*, 28 April 2023]

The Air Force is changing the process of how First Term Airmen can retrain to provide additional opportunities for Airmen to stay in uniform instead of separating. Effective June 1, all FTA can retrain into any Air Force Specialty Code they qualify for that is under 90% manned prior to separation, even if their current AFSC is below 90% manned. Qualified Airmen must be within their retaining window and meet medical, Air Force Enlisted Classification Directory standards, Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery score and physical fitness standards to be approved. The [Exception to Policy](#) will be reassessed June 1, 2024, unless it is rescinded earlier.

[Fort Polk to be Renamed for New York Guardsman Henry Johnson](#) [Eric Durr, *National Guard News Service*, 18 May 2023]

Fort Polk in Louisiana will be renamed for New York National Guard Sgt. Henry Johnson, a World War I hero, during a June 13 ceremony at the post. The Army installation named for Confederate Gen. Leonidas K. Polk, a resident of New Orleans who was killed in combat in 1864, will become Fort Johnson. The fort is home to the Joint Readiness Training Center and the 3rd Brigade Combat Team of the 10th Mountain Division. Henry Johnson was working as a porter at Albany's Union Station when he enlisted in the New York National Guard's segregated 15th New York (Colored) Infantry Regiment on June 5, 1917, two months after the United States entered World War I. Johnson became a national hero after he fought off a German raiding party with a knife and saved fellow Soldier Needham Roberts from capture on the night of May 15, 1918.

[Government dress codes? They're old hat, federal workers say in survey](#) [Molly Weisner, *Federal Times*, 19 May 2023]

As the White House faces calls to bring federal employees back to government office buildings, many are wondering if the old rules about how to dress for the office still apply, or if the rise in casual attire that came with working from home will continue to rule. Almost all agencies allowed some level of telework pre-pandemic. Now, with reentry at various stages in government, it begs the question, and readers answered: will workplace attire revert to the old rules if telework does?

[Lidia Bastianich honors immigrants and their food in PBS special "Lidia Celebrates America"](#) [Mark Kennedy, *The Associated Press*, 16 May 2023]

In her new PBS special, Lidia Bastianich samples the foods of the world without ever crossing the U.S. border. The Emmy-award winning TV host, author and restaurateur explores the immigrant experience through food in "[Lidia Celebrates America: Flavors That Define Us.](#)" It airs May 30 on PBS and will also stream starting that day on PBS.org and the PBS app. Throughout the series, Bastianich and the immigrants share their food, from stuffed flatbread from India to the Cuban classic ropa vieja. She marvels at the different flavors but also the commonalities.

[Meet D'Arcy Drollinger, a drag performer who's now the first drag laureate in the U.S.](#) [Stephanie Dazio and Haven Daley, *The Associated Press*, 18 May 2023]

Anti-trans legislation is roiling the nation. Bills prohibiting drag performances are cropping up in statehouses. Violence and vitriol are turning children's drag story hour events into headline-news protests. San Francisco is fighting back Thursday by naming the nation's first drag laureate, an ambassador-style position designed to represent the city's famous LGBTQ+ community at a time when rights are under attack. In a city known for its support of LGBTQ+ rights, San Francisco Mayor London Breed says it was a natural step to create a position that not only embraces drag culture but puts government resources toward it. D'Arcy Drollinger, a well-known drag performer and nightclub owner, will receive a \$55,000 stipend in her 18-month role as the city's inaugural drag laureate.

[Military installations are also sites of American cultural heritage](#) [Tom Temin, *Federal News Network*, 16 May 2023] [AUDIO WITH TRANSCRIPT]

Army camps and bases often feature architecture worth preserving. One example is Camp Dodge, an Army National Guard training facility in Iowa. Its construction and facilities management staff won a Pentagon award earlier this year for restoration of its 1907 gate house and perimeter fence. For more

details, “Federal Drive with Tom Temin” spoke with Col. John Perkins, the Facilities and Management Director at Camp Dodge.

[Most U.S. Latino history is left out of high school textbooks, study finds](#) [Edwin Flores, *NBC News*, 17 May 2023]

Most of the seminal events impacting U.S. Latino history are not a subject of study in high schools across the country, according to a [new report](#) by Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy and UnidosUS, a national Latino advocacy and research organization. The study found that 87% of key Latino topics were either not covered in U.S. history textbooks or were mentioned in just five or fewer sentences. Over a quarter of the nation’s K-12 public school students are Latino.

[National Museum of the U.S. Air Force to celebrate 100th anniversary](#) [*WHIO TV 7 (Dayton, Ohio)*, 18 May 2023]

The [National Museum of the U.S. Air Force](#) will be celebrating its 100th Anniversary with events this weekend. It will host a special Plane Talks in honor of Armed Forces Day on Saturday, May 20, and the public opening of the museum’s 100th Anniversary exhibit on Sunday, according to a spokesperson. 100 Years of Heritage: National Museum of the U.S. Air Force, 1923-2023, will be held in the Cold War Art Gallery located in the third building. The exhibit will display the history of the museum.

[Statement from President Joe Biden on International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia](#) [Joseph R. Biden, Jr., *White House Press Office*, 17 May 2023]

Everyone is entitled to be treated with dignity and equality—no matter whom they love, or how they identify. On the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia, we reaffirm our commitment to this ongoing work and stand with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) people around the world. All of us have a responsibility to speak out and stand up against hate and violence in any form. When the rights of any group or individual are under attack, it endangers our own freedom, and the freedom of people everywhere.

[The women who won the right to fly in combat](#) [Eileen A. Bjorkman, *Military Times*, 13 May 2023] [COMMENTARY]

Thirty years ago, U.S. women earned the right to fly in combat, but the full story of how it happened is largely unknown. From the first women in the military in World War II to the final push in the 1990s, Eileen Bjorkman’s new book, [“The Fly Girls Revolt: The Story of the Women Who Kicked Open the Door to Fly in Combat”](#) (Knox Press) chronicles the actions of a band of women who overcame decades of discrimination and prevailed against bureaucrats, chauvinists, anti-feminists, and even other military women.

DISCRIMINATION

[EEOC’s 20% backlog of discrimination charges “alarming” to GOP House lawmakers](#) [Dawn Friedman, *Federal News Network*, 18 May 2023]

A growing backlog of discrimination charges that employees filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is gaining criticism from Republican leaders on the House Education and Workforce Committee. The lawmakers added that they were “alarmed” by the total number of cases in EEOC’s charge backlog, which rose from 42,811 to 51,399 pending charges between fiscal 2021 and

2022. On average, it takes EEOC about 10 months to resolve a charge that an employee files, according to the agency's website.

[Missouri high school student suspended 3 days after recording teacher using racial slur in class](#) [Antonio Planas, NBC News, 16 May 2023]

A high school sophomore in Missouri was suspended three days after she recorded her teacher last week using a racist slur in class, prompting the teenager's lawyer and mother to demand that the district apologize and expunge the suspension from her record. Under the district policy in the student handbook titled "Inappropriate Use of Electronic Devices," students are prohibited from recording faculty members or students without approval. Punishments for first offenses in high school range from a meeting between parents and faculty members to detention and a maximum three-day suspension.

[More gay and bisexual men can donate blood under new FDA rules](#) [Berkeley Lovelace, Jr., NBC News, 11 May 2023]

The Food and Drug Administration said Thursday that it [finalized a new rule](#) that will allow more gay and bisexual men to donate blood. Under the latest guidelines, all potential donors would need to complete individualized risk assessments—regardless of gender or sexual orientation. People who have had anal sex with new partners or more than one partner in the last three months would be asked to wait to donate blood. The updated guidelines mean most gay and bisexual men who are in monogamous relationships with other men will no longer need to abstain from sex to donate blood.

[Penguin Random House sues Florida school district over book bans](#) [Anthony Izaguirre, The Associated Press, 17 May 2023]

Publisher Penguin Random House and PEN America sued a Florida school district Wednesday over its removal of books about race and LGBTQ+ identities, the latest opposition to a policy central to Gov. Ron DeSantis' agenda as he prepares to run for president. The federal lawsuit alleges the Escambia County School District and its School Board are violating the First Amendment through the removal of 10 books from library shelves.

[What agencies and federal employees should know about the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act](#) [Drew Friedman, Federal News Network, 16 May 2023]

Legal obligations to provide accommodations to pregnant employees under the [Pregnant Workers Fairness Act](#) (PWFA) apply to employers nationwide, but federal agencies may have a slightly different route for implementing the new law. The PWFA, which President Joe Biden signed into law in December, will officially take effect June 27. The new law broadens the current set of employment anti-discrimination laws, including the Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, to let pregnant employees request and receive accommodations, regardless of whether their limitations rise to the level of a disability.

DIVERSITY

[Soldier, single mom of two, perseveres to find balance](#) [Joe Lacdan, Army News Service, 11 May 2023]

Her day begins at 3:30 a.m., when Sgt. Kathryn Daniels hydrates and prepares herself for work as a Stryker systems mechanic. Before sun rises, the 24-year-old mother has woken her two children, Isabella, 3, and son, Tiago, 15 months, and helped them put on their clothes for preschool. At 6 a.m. she drives 20 minutes from the family's home in base housing to drop her kids off at their child care center

just outside of the Texas installation. Then already wearing her black exercise sweats, she hustles back to her unit's formation at the Fort Cavazos motorpool. For an hour she does pushups, sit-ups and a short run with Soldiers in her unit. Being a single mother of two and a Soldier can be a daunting task. But Daniels, one of about 9,800 single moms serving in the Army today, weathers that challenge every day.

[UT Austin Opens Disability Cultural Center Focused on Inclusion](#) [Erik Cliburn, *Insight Into Diversity*, 14 May 2023]

The University of Texas at Austin's (UT Austin) new Disability Cultural Center (DCC) builds community and connections for students with disabilities and pushes forward important cultural conversations as they relate to disability on campus and in society. The DCC mirrors the work being done at other cultural centers on campus, such as the Multicultural Engagement Center and the Gender and Sexuality Center, by making disability and accessibility a larger part of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. While UT Austin's Disability and Access office focuses more on logistics, accommodations, and legal compliances, the DCC emphasizes strengthening relationships among individuals with disabilities and encouraging thought-provoking discussions focused on accessibility, civil rights, and identity. The center's more informal approach is designed to help members of the campus community connect with each other.

EXTREMISM

[Indiana Army veteran convicted in road rage killing of Muslim man](#) [*The Associated Press*, 18 May 2023]

A suburban Indianapolis Army veteran has been convicted in the road rage shooting death of a Muslim man, after witnesses said he hurled ethnic and religious insults at the victim, including yelling, "Go back to your country," before opening fire. A Marion County jury convicted Dustin E. Passarelli, 37, of murder on Wednesday after a three-day trial over the February 2019 killing of 32-year-old Mustafa Ayoubi. Passarelli, of Plainfield, could get up to 65 years in prison when he's sentenced June 21 on the murder charge. He was also convicted of a firearm enhancement charge that could boost his sentence by up to 20 years, the county prosecutor's office said.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[IRS granted tax-exempt status to extremists, including an Oath Keepers foundation—here's why that's not as surprising as it sounds](#) [Elizabeth Schmidt, *The Conversation*, 18 May 2023] [COMMENTARY]

When someone mentions nonprofits, chances are you picture homeless shelters, free medical clinics, museums and other groups that you believe are doing good one way or another. Most of these organizations are legitimate. But not all nonprofits are principled or embrace missions everyone considers worthy of the tax-exempt status that the government grants some 2 million organizations. You might presume that the government would automatically refuse to grant tax-exempt status to White nationalist and anti-government groups. Yet as a scholar who has researched nonprofit accountability, I've seen the authorities struggle to draw the line between which organizations deserve to operate as nonprofits and those that don't.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Marine is first active-duty military member convicted in Jan. 6 riot](#) [Tom Jackman, *The Washington Post*, 17 May 2023]

An active-duty Marine who entered the Capitol with two of his colleagues from the Quantico Marine Corps Base on Jan. 6, 2021, and then spent more than 50 minutes wandering through the building, pleaded guilty Wednesday to a misdemeanor count of illegally parading or demonstrating in the Capitol. All three Marines work in intelligence gathering, including one at the National Security Agency headquarters in Maryland. Cpl. Micah R. Coomer, 24, is allegedly the fourth active-duty Marine from Quantico to breach the Capitol on Jan. 6, and the first active-duty military member to plead guilty in the riot.

[The U.S. needs a moonshot to prevent extremism from metastasizing](#) [Marek N. Posard and K. Jack Riley, *The Hill*, 16 May 2023] [OPINION]

There are very real, and growing, concerns about domestic extremism these days. In a poll from last year, 88 percent of Americans reported that they were very or somewhat concerned about politically motivated violence. To put this in perspective, in the month after 9/11, 71 percent of Americans said they were very or somewhat worried about another terrorist attack. As the country heads into what will likely be a highly polarized election cycle, there is a real and growing need for a sustained investment that could prevent extremism from ripping through the social fabric of the country. Extremism is like cancer: It will always exist, but ignoring it runs the risk that it rears its ugly head, metastasizing throughout the country.

HUMAN RELATIONS

[How the American Dream convinces people loneliness is normal](#) [Ted Anthony, *The Associated Press*, 16 May 2023]

At the end of “The Searchers,” one of John Wayne’s most renowned Westerns, a kidnapped girl has been rescued and a family reunited. As the closing music swells, Wayne’s character looks around at his kin—people who have other people to lean on—and then walks off toward the dusty West Texas horizon, lonesome and alone. It’s a classic example of a fundamental American tall tale—that of a nation built on notions of individualism, a male-dominated story filled with loners and “rugged individualists” who suck it up, do what needs to be done, ride off into the sunset and like it that way. In reality, loneliness in America can be deadly. This month, U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy declared it an American epidemic, saying that it takes as deadly a toll as smoking upon the population of the United States. “Millions of people in America are struggling in the shadows,” he said, “and that’s not right.”

INTERNATIONAL

[Austrian train plays Hitler speech over loudspeaker](#) [BBC News, 15 May 2023]

Travellers on an intercity train in Austria were startled on Sunday when a recording of an Adolf Hitler speech was played on board. Instead of the normal announcements, a crowd could also be heard shouting “Heil Hitler” and “Sieg Heil” over the train’s speaker system. The operator said there had been several such incidents in recent days. David Stoegmueller, a Green Party MP, said the speech by the Nazi German leader was played over the intercom shortly before the train, an ÖBB Railjet 661, arrived in Vienna. Mr Stoegmueller said the train staff were unable to stop the recording and were unable to make their own announcements.

[Beijing LGBT Center shuttered as crackdown grows in China](#) [Huizhong Wu, *The Associated Press*, 16 May 2023]

An advocacy group that also served as a safe space for the LGBTQ community in Beijing became the latest organization to close under a crackdown by Chinese leader Xi Jinping's government. Beijing LGBT Center did not respond to an email request for comment. The Ministry of Civil Affairs, which oversees nonprofits in China, also did not immediately respond to a faxed request for comment. The group's shuttering marks a critical blow for advocacy groups that once had been able to be public about their work for LGBTQ+ rights.

[In Mexico, new non-binary passport can now sidestep male or female box](#) [David Alire Garcia, Reuters, 17 May 2023]

Mexicans applying for a passport can now avoid having to check the box for male or female in a new travel document policy announced on Wednesday and hailed by the country's top diplomat as historic progress for those who identify as non-binary. The new non-binary passport was unveiled at an event hosted by Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard, but it came under immediate criticism by some non-binary activists as confusing gender with sex. Under the new passport policy, non-binary Mexicans who do not identify as either a man or a woman, which are gender categories, can now respond with an "X" on paperwork that asks applicants to choose between male or female, which are biological sex categories.

[Over 40% of Italy's LGBTQ workers say careers have been hit by discrimination](#) [Reuters, 15 May 2023]

Four out of 10 LGBT+ people in Italy believe discrimination has damaged them at work, a survey by national statistics bureau ISTAT and state anti-discrimination office UNAR showed on Monday. Among those surveyed, 41.4% said that being homosexual or bisexual had been a disadvantage for their career, professional recognition or salary, especially among payroll workers in the private sector. More than six out of 10 preferred not to speak about their private lives at work in order to avoid revealing their sexual orientation, the survey showed.

MISCELLANEOUS

[Additional Protections for Department of Defense Personnel against Personal Liability for Performing Their Official Duties](#) [DOD News Service, 19 May 2023]

A memo regarding additional protections for Defense Department personnel against personal liability for performing their official duties.

[Air Guard considers cutting enlisted mental health specialists](#) [Rachel S. Cohen, Military Times, 12 May 2023]

The Air National Guard is considering cutting its corps of enlisted mental health specialists, but a final decision is still in the works, a spokesperson told Air Force Times. Around 1,000 enlisted airmen work in the mental health services field, known by the code "4C0," across the active duty Air Force and its reserve components, according to the Air Force Association's 2022 almanac. Schatz did not answer how many are part of the Air National Guard.

[Armed Forces Wellness Centers Help All to Improve Lifestyle, Health Outcomes](#) [Jim Garamone, DOD News, 16 May 2023]

Maintaining fitness is often a challenge for service members and their families, but COVID-19 wreaked havoc with fitness routines and the Defense Health Agency would like to get people back on track. The Wellness Centers began as an Army program in 2008 and has since expanded to all services, officials

said. They designed the program to “provide healthy behavior change through science-based education, coaching and technology for service members, their families, military retirees and DOD civilians,” Nicole Leth, the director of the Fort Belvoir Armed Forces Wellness Center, said. The Armed Forces Wellness Center is a key to ensuring better health to all who use it.

[Chaplains taking frontline role in surface fleet mental health](#) [Geoff Ziezulewicz, *Military Times*, 12 May 2023]

“The majority of our sailors’ issues are to the left of mental illness,” Capt. Tara Smith, the surface fleet’s chief mental health officer and a clinical psychologist, told *Navy Times*. “It’s life stress, it’s adulting, it’s everything...being away from home, adapting to the work hours, adapting to the environment aboard the ship.” To help surface fleet sailors find someone they can vent to about these everyday stressors—and to ensure Smith’s clinic can focus on more serious cases—Naval Surface Forces is expanding its efforts to make chaplains a permanent part of the guided-missile destroyer fleet.

[Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey gives voice to civilians’ opinions](#) [Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs, *Space Force News Service*, 8 May 2023]

The [Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey](#) is available for eligible Department of the Air Force employees now and will continue through June 23. The feedback civilian employees gave in 2022 have earned the service the #9 ranking for large agencies by the Partnership for Public Service’s “Best Places to Work in the Federal Government” in 2022. The FEVS is a government-wide, Office of Personnel Management administered survey for federal civilian employees first available in 2002. The survey includes questions about employees’ work-life, job and organizational satisfaction, commitment, engagement, performance management and communication. The 2023 FEVS also includes questions to measure performance confidence and employee perception of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility.

[Mental Health Statistics Reveal a Crisis in America](#) [Rachel Gottlieb, *Government Executive*, 17 May 2023]

As part of [Mental Health Awareness month](#), organizations and governmental bodies are releasing reports with astounding statistics about the state of mental health in the U.S. Perhaps the most tragic number is the 48,000 people who died by suicide in 2021, according to a [report by Pew Charitable Trusts](#). It was the 11th leading cause of death that year. Furthermore, Pew reports, 5% of the world’s population is suffering from depression. Although Americans are spending billions each year on mental health—\$280 billion in 2020 alone—Pew reports that in 2019, 57% of Americans with mental illnesses didn’t get the care they needed.

[Survey: 45% of Gov Employees May Walk if Agencies Reduce Remote Work Flexibility](#) [Frank Konkel, *Government Executive*, 18 May 2023]

Nearly half of government employees will look for another job if their agencies reduce remote work flexibility, [according to a survey](#) released Tuesday by Arlington, Va.-based firm Eagle Hill Consulting. The survey, which polled more than 500 federal, state and local government employees from April 27 to May 1, further found that about 60% of remote and hybrid government workers would say their job satisfaction would decrease if their employer mandated a return to in-person work. More than 4 in 10 (44%) said their productivity would decrease with such a requirement, and 45% said any mandate for in-person work would reduce the time they stay with their current employer.

[The wait for government disability services can last years. Some states are trying to change that](#) [Adam Kemp, *PBS News*, 15 May 2023]

More than half a million Americans with intellectual and developmental disabilities are currently waiting for government funding for long-term care in their homes. That list of individuals, who need lifelong or extended support to live independently within their communities, is lengthy in dozens of states, forcing them to wait, often for years, to acquire assistance with daily tasks such as cooking and transportation. Oklahoma's backlog had grown to more than 5,000 people before state lawmakers approved funding last year to eliminate a waitlist for disability services that had a wait time of up to 13 years. The \$32.5 million package was the largest-ever funding increase in the history of Oklahoma's Department of Human Services.

[Workplace AI: How artificial intelligence will transform the workday](#) [Casey Noenickx, *BBC Worklife*, 17 May 2023]

Artificial intelligence has been around for years, but scarcely has it found itself in conversation as much as it has now. The launch of OpenAI's ChatGPT rocketed generative AI onto the radar of many people who hadn't been paying much attention—or didn't feel it was relevant to their lives. This has included workers, who've already been touched by the technology, whether they know it or not. The chatbot, which uses machine learning to respond to user prompts, is helping workers write cover letters and resumes, generate ideas and even art in the workplace and more. Although some workers fear being replaced by AI, experts say the technology may actually have the power to positively impact workers' daily lives and skill sets, and even improve the overall work economy.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

MISCONDUCT

[Hazing reports in the Marine Corps have dropped significantly](#) [Irene Loewenson, *Military Times*, 12 May 2023]

Reports of hazing in the Marine Corps have decreased 63% in recent years—a promising sign for the branch that historically has appeared to have the largest hazing problem in the military. The Marine Corps saw 94 cases of alleged hazing in fiscal year 2022, following a steady decrease from 256 in fiscal year 2018, according to internal reports on hazing obtained by Marine Corps Times via a public records request.

[Supreme Court may weigh constitutionality of court-martialing retirees](#) [Irene Loewenson, *Military Times*, 18 May 2023]

A retired staff sergeant who pleaded guilty to a sexual assault that occurred after his time as an active duty Marine has asked the Supreme Court to decide whether his prosecution under military law was unconstitutional. Retired Staff Sgt. Steven M. Larrabee in November 2015 sexually assaulted a civilian bartender at a bar in Iwakuni, Japan, and recorded it on his phone, [according to his cert petition](#), the document in which he asked the court to review his case. Larrabee appealed his conviction, arguing that military law shouldn't apply to him because he was no longer in the military. He maintained he should have instead been tried under civilian law, [Military Times previously reported](#).

RACISM

[Black victims of violent crime disproportionately denied aid in many states](#) [Claudia Lauer and Mike Catalini, *The Associated Press*, 17 May 2023]

Every state has a program to reimburse victims for lost wages, medical bills, funerals and other expenses, awarding hundreds of millions in aid each year. But an Associated Press examination found that Black victims and their families are disproportionately denied compensation in many states, often for subjective reasons that experts say are rooted in racial biases. The AP found disproportionately high denial rates in 19 out of 23 states willing to provide detailed racial data, the largest collection of such data to date. In some states, including Indiana, Georgia and South Dakota, Black applicants were nearly twice as likely as White applicants to be denied. From 2018 through 2021, the denials added up to thousands of Black families each year collectively missing out on millions of dollars in aid.

RELIGION

[Airmen Get New System for Tracking Religious Accommodations After Pandemic Fiasco](#) [Thomas Novelty, *Military.com*, 16 May 2023]

Air Force officials unveiled a new effort Monday that will show airmen and Space Force Guardians the status of their religious and reasonable accommodations following mismanagement of records and legal action related to the COVID-19 vaccine mandate. The new Department of the Air Force Accommodation Portal will be a central location that will allow service members to review their records and see how their accommodation requests are progressing.

[Co-workers could bear costs of accommodating religious employees in the workplace if Supreme Court tosses out 46-year-old precedent](#) [Debbie Kaminer, *The Conversation*, 15 May 2023]

*The Supreme Court may soon transform the role of faith in the workplace, which could have the effect of elevating the rights of religious workers at the expense of co-workers. On April 18, 2023, the court heard oral arguments in *Groff v. DeJoy*, a case addressing an employer's obligation to accommodate religious employees' requests under federal law. The dispute involves a Christian postal worker who quit his job and sued the U.S. Postal Service after he was unable to find coverage for his Sunday shifts. Current law requires employers to make accommodations for workers' religious requests only if doing so doesn't impose more than a minimal cost on their business, known as the "de minimis" standard.*

[Saddleback Church appealing its ouster from the Southern Baptists on issue of women pastors](#) [Peter Smith, *The Associated Press*, 16 April 2023]

Saddleback Church, the Southern California megachurch founded by best-selling author Rick Warren, is appealing its ouster from the Southern Baptist Convention for having women pastors on staff, according to the denomination. The appeal extends the standoff between the nation's largest Protestant denomination and one of its largest, most successful churches. Saddleback was one of five congregations that the committee ousted over the issue of women as pastors. One of those congregations, Fern Creek Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky, is also appealing its dismissal.

SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARASSMENT

[Battalion commander relieved after holiday ball faces court-martial](#) [Davis Winkie, *Army Times*, 18 May 2023]

The ex-commander of an engineer battalion stationed at Fort Polk, Louisiana, faces a June general court-martial for abusive sexual contact, according to online court records and an installation spokesperson. Lt. Col. Jon-Paul Depreo, the former commander of the 46th Engineer Battalion, is charged with one count of abusive sexual contact, one count of maltreating a subordinate and two counts of conduct unbecoming an officer, said Fort Polk spokesperson Shelby Waryas. Depreo was fired as commander in January for “a loss of trust and confidence in his judgment and ability to command.”

SUICIDE

[Investigation: Four sailor suicides from same command not connected](#) [Geoff Ziezulewicz, *Navy Times*, 18 May 2023]

The suicides of four sailors assigned to the same unit in Virginia within a span of 28 days late last year were not directly connected, according to a service investigation released Thursday. But the losses all involved sailors who had accessed Navy mental health services and were dealing with “family, financial, medical and career-related factors.” The investigating team assessed that “access to personally owned firearms and unwillingness to surrender access to lethal means, to include the use of gun locks, was a causal factor in the deaths.”

VETERANS

[Golf maintenance program aims to ace veteran employment](#) [Dave Lubach, *Military Times*, 12 May 2023]

Military veterans are often seeking quality employment, and like many industries across the country today, the golf industry needs quality candidates to fill open jobs. By 2024, two organizations hope to have addressed these two issues simultaneously. The [Warrior Alliance](#), an organization with a mission to help connect transitioning veterans and active-duty service members to a network of employees nationwide, is teaming up with the [Golf Course Superintendents Association of America](#) (GCSAA) to move military veterans into careers in the golf course maintenance industry.

[Have you experienced harassment at VA?](#) [Dr. Patricia Hayes, *VA News*, 16 May 2023]

Have you ever been told to smile more? Been cat-called? Has anyone ever questioned your Veteran status, maybe saying you don't “Look like a Veteran” or maybe you are “Too pretty to be a Veteran?” About 1 in 5 women Veterans have reported being harassed while at a VA facility, so VA is working to address and end inappropriate behavior. If you ever feel unsafe or uncomfortable, it's important to know what to do. If you ever experience harassment, we encourage you to report it to the facility's VA police, Patient Advocate, Women Veteran Program Manager or any VA staff member. For additional help, you can call or text the Women Veterans Call Center at 1-855-829-6636, or chat with them online. You can also call the VA Harassment Prevention Program at 1-888-566-3982.