

**Statement of
The Honorable James L. Oberstar, Chairman**

**Hearing on
“A Continuing Examination of Civil Rights Services and
Diversity in the Coast Guard”
Subcommittee on the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation**

June 19, 2009

Mr. Chairman, thank you for scheduling today's hearing to follow up on the Coast Guard's civil rights services and its diversity initiatives. This is the second hearing with regards to the civil rights issues and the third for diversity. I truly admire and appreciate your continued persistence to ensure that we have the world's best Coast Guard made up of personnel from all ethnicities, geographical areas and who are treated fairly as they serve this great Nation.

I am profoundly disappointed with the lack of diversity of the incoming Academy class. With all the oversight this Subcommittee has committed to diversification of the student body at the Coast Guard academy, I am shocked that you only have five African Americans entering the class of 2013 and that you only offered two African American students appointments that were coming directly from high school that did not need additional preparation from a preparatory school. The Naval Academy found 149 fully qualified African Americans to attend their Academy and the Coast Guard didn't even track the number of fully qualified personnel.

I would like to know what the Coast Guard plans to do to increase their number of minority applicants and those offered appointments over this next year. The number of minorities at the Coast Guard Academy has been disappointing for at least the past five years. We should not be talking about this issue for the next 10 years. I want to know what you are going to do to change it.

The Naval Academy has done an outstanding job with regards to recruiting minorities and I would like to commend them on their monumental accomplishment of having the most diverse class to ever enter the Naval Academy this summer with approximately 35% minorities.

I am pleased to hear that the Office of Civil Rights has made progress with regards to implementing some of the needed changes, and coming up with a plan to ensure workplace equity. Although I am commending you for your changes, I would like to continue to see forward progress with regards to solving the issues identified in the reviews of the Civil Rights programs.

I want to thank Vice Admiral Pearson, Mrs. Terry Dickerson and Mr. Stephen Latta for being here today and look forward to your testimony. Chairman Cummings, I look forward to working with you and Ranking Members Mica and LoBiondo during this important hearing.

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