



### Commanding Officer's Policy on Equal Opportunity

The purpose of this policy is to ensure all assigned to this command are afforded a fair and equitable chance to achieve their full potential.

Per Marine Corps Order MCO P5354.1D, equal opportunity is defined as the right of all persons to participate in and benefit from programs and activities for which they are qualified. These programs and activities will be free from social, personal, or institutional barriers that prevent people from rising to the highest level of responsibility possible. Persons will be evaluated on individual merit, fitness, and capability, regardless of age, color, national origin, race, ethnic group, religion or gender.

We derive great strength from our diversity. Discriminatory practices undermine this strength and suppress the innovation we achieve from leveraging our varied backgrounds and experiences. Worst of all, though, discrimination is a betrayal of the fundamental trust that all Marines and Sailors will be treated with dignity and respect. As I have previously stated, the purpose of this battalion is success in combat, and shared trust is critical to this success. We cannot expect Marines and Sailors to willfully make the sacrifices we will ask of them in combat if we have betrayed this fundamental trust.

Every Marine and Sailor deserves the right to achieve their full potential, and discrimination, therefore, will not be tolerated. Every Marine and Sailor will be provided equal opportunity without regard to age, color, gender, race, religion, or national origin.

Any Marine or Sailor who believes they have been subjected to discrimination is afforded the opportunity, either informally or formally, to seek redress. The decision to utilize either informal or formal procedures rests solely with the Marine or Sailor, not his chain of command. Whenever possible, Marines and Sailors are encouraged to use the Informal Resolution System, as this is often the most expeditious means to attempt resolution. Request Mast procedures are the preferred method of making a formal complaint of discrimination.

This is a leadership issue, and I expect leaders to lead.

Semper Fidelis,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Cooper, Jr.', written over a horizontal line.

Carl E. Cooper, Jr.  
Lieutenant Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps  
Commanding