

SECRETARY OF LABOR
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20210

DEC 12 2017

U.S. Department of Labor Policy Statement on Harassing Conduct in the Workplace
R. Alexander Acosta, Secretary of Labor

The Department of Labor (DOL) plays a critical role in contributing to the nation's economic future. As such, we should incorporate workplace practices that encourage and foster a work environment in which concerns are voiced, and are immediately and appropriately addressed, in order to effectively serve as a model for employers. As Secretary of Labor, I fully support DOL's strict prohibition of harassment. We must maintain a work environment that is free from unlawful harassment and where all employees are treated with dignity and respect.

DOL strives to eliminate harassment before it becomes severe or pervasive enough to violate the law. DOL defines harassing conduct as any unwelcome conduct, verbal or physical, based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, transgender status, gender identity, sexual harassment, and sex stereotyping), national origin (including ethnicity, accent, and use of a language other than English), age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, parental status, sexual orientation, marital status, political affiliation or belief, or any other prohibited factor. Prohibited factors include, but are not limited to, unreasonable interference with an employee's work performance or actions that create a hostile or abusive work environment, or an action that results in an employment decision affecting the employee, which is based upon the employee's acceptance or rejection of such conduct.

Harassing conduct has no place in DOL; therefore, we apply this policy equally to DOL employees, applicants for DOL employment, and contractors. Harassing conduct by managers, supervisors, or employees, including contractors, at any level, will not be tolerated. Any employee who believes that he or she has been subjected to, or has witnessed, any harassing conduct should report the matter promptly to a person in their supervisory chain, their Agency Workplace Equality Compliance Office (WECO), or, for regional office employees, the Regional Administrator of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management (OASAM) in the region where the conduct took place. In regional cases, the OASAM Regional Administrator will promptly notify the Agency WECO. Further, any applicant who believes that he or she has been subjected to harassing conduct during the process of applying for DOL employment should report the incident to the WECO of OASAM.

In instances of alleged harassing conduct, we must take every step to ensure a fair and prompt resolution. All supervisors and managers must act fairly and promptly to investigate and resolve reports of harassing conduct. Where appropriate, DOL will provide interim relief to employees who are victims of alleged harassing conduct to ensure that further misconduct does not occur. If harassing conduct is found to have occurred, supervisors and managers must take appropriate corrective and disciplinary actions, up to and including removal. DOL will take disciplinary actions against supervisors who do not fully carry out their responsibilities under this policy.

We also prohibit retaliation against any employee for making a good-faith report of harassing conduct or for cooperating with or participating in any investigation of alleged harassing conduct. All information provided to DOL officials will be maintained on a confidential basis to the greatest extent possible.

I strongly affirm my commitment to fostering a safe work environment where every employee is treated with dignity and respect, and in which employees feel free to raise concerns that will be properly addressed. We must work together to vigorously identify harassing conduct and promptly resolve reports of such conduct within DOL.

This policy is separate and apart from any collective bargaining agreement or statutory complaint process covering harassment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. M. Acosta", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

R. ALEXANDER ACOSTA