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United States
Coast Guard



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DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

U. S. COAST GUARD

STATEMENT OF

**RADM JODY BRECKENRIDGE
ASSISTANT COMMANDANT FOR HUMAN RESOURCES**

ON THE

DIVERSITY IN THE COAST GUARD

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD AND MARINE TRANSPORTATION**

U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 1, 2009

Good morning Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Committee. I am Rear Admiral Jody Breckenridge, the Coast Guard's Assistant Commandant for Human Resources. It is a pleasure to appear before you today to discuss the Coast Guard's progress on diversity.

Mr. Chairman, the Coast Guard recognizes that diversity is an organizational imperative. The Service is committed to building and sustaining an organizational and workplace climate which enhance the potential and contributions of all employees by promoting inclusion, equity, and respect. I heard you at the September hearing and have taken steps to promote awareness of -- and access to -- the entire spectrum of Coast Guard opportunities: officer, enlisted, civilian, Reserve. I left the hearing with a renewed commitment to step out more aggressively and am here to report on those actions.

Mr. Chairman, we also thank you and Representative Courtney for your leadership and support in getting Coast Guard Academy information posted on Congressional websites. Our research shows only about 50 percent of the websites contain information regarding opportunities at the Academy. Additionally, we recently hired into a new position to raise visibility within Congressional offices on opportunities in the Coast Guard, as well as the Coast Guard Academy. She is ready to assist any office in posting the information and understanding our requirements and programs. This expanded outreach will allow many more Americans to learn of and consider the Coast Guard.

DIVERSITY UPDATE

In our focus on accessions, we've accomplished much in the six months since I last testified. There has been notable progress in our enlisted and officer recruiting programs. Our enlisted recruiting mid-year results for FY 2009 show a 7 percent increase in minority accessions and a 4 percent increase in women compared to the same period in 2008. The enlisted reserve accessions so far this year show a 16 percent gain, and female accessions are up 11 percent over the same period last year as well. Our recruiting mission emphasis will strive to carry this positive trend through the remainder of the year. Our officer programs data shows that applicant pools are increasing. The College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative (CSPI) candidate pools are at an all-time high. Of the current 42 candidates in the program, 48 percent are minority and 38 percent are female. The projected pool of applicants for the panel that meets later this spring is also shaping up to have the largest candidate pool of any CSPI selection panel we have ever convened. We expect between 60 and 70 applicants. That is a significant increase over the 48 applicants in 2008 and the 30 in 2007. For this upcoming panel, we project the female and minority candidates will make up between 65-70 percent of the candidates. The Academy class of 2013 (in final stages of the selection process for this year) had an overall applicant increase and a 23 percent increase in minority candidates over last year. With this applicant pool, we estimate there will be a slight increase over the 11 percent of minority cadets that entered the Academy last year. I expect a sustained strong female presence at the Academy and project that 25-30 percent of the incoming class will be female. I will be happy to report back the final candidate selection results to you in June. The incoming "Scholars Program," the academy 1-year prep program, is currently projected to be made up of 50 percent minority cadet candidates and is expected to make strong future class contributions as well.

Mr. Chairman, I expressed our (diversity) vision—the starting point. But how do we know when we have arrived at our DIVERSITY [demographic representational] destination? We use the US Census data and racial and ethnicity projections as our guide. We continually measure our recruiting and retention progress to assess if we are on the correct upward glide slope to achieve greater workforce diversity. Clearly other variables such as "propensity to serve" apply, but we

believe that the use of an upward trend line based on the demographic forecast to be of value IN GUIDING OUR EFFORTS.” [and consistent with the tenets of equal employment opportunity.”]

In affirmative action jurisprudence, the courts have been critical of the use specific representational objectives. Accordingly, the Coast Guard does not set specific proportional objectives. Nonetheless, with a view toward the demographic trends, we continue to emphasize greater workforce diversity.

LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Leadership action is crucial to the success of our plan; accountability starts at the top. Since I last appeared before you, Mr. Chairman, the Commandant of the Coast Guard, Admiral Thad Allen, re-directed an additional \$1.4M in fiscal 2009 resources to fund our diversity initiatives.

The Commandant also published a diversity video which is shown at leadership forums and is available to all units.

Our Flag and Senior Executive Service members will participate in at least one affinity group national conference annually. Our senior executives are committed to this engagement – we are actively working with each of them to support speakers, flag panels, and one-on-one counseling at each of the conferences.

Commanding officers will attend at least one event during their tour and shall encourage workforce participation. We will monitor requests and attendance at each affinity group conference.

A member of the Coast Guard’s senior leadership will visit each commanding officer conference, prospective commanding officer/executive officer course, or program conference to address our workforce diversity, our call to action, and how they can contribute to the accession/retention of our diverse workforce.

As we examined our workforce investment and retention activities, we found that women and minorities in our enlisted force tend to be concentrated in a small number of ratings. Last year, the Coast Guard ranked number one among the Armed Services in recruit quality. We are clearly recruiting bright, talented people with many of our recruits qualified for multiple career specialty schools. However, we have not seen much change over time in the workforce distribution across ratings. We are going to focus commands on the rating selection process. We will arm commands with information to discuss the member’s career interests, advise them of all the ratings they qualify for, and document that discussion. We want all non-rated personnel to understand their options and to make a well-informed decision when selecting their career specialty. The best way to retain a diverse workforce is to ensure they select their best career path early on.

We will provide our hiring officials for our civilian workforce with the best practices employed by other federal agencies for hiring Hispanics.

We will share the organizational steps we have taken this year in response to the maritime industry and our own workforce needs to change our representation within marine investigation and inspections. Working with program personnel, we established step positions to expand our applicant pools to college graduates and partnered with industry for new marketing sources. We reinvigorated established campus relationships with six Maritime Academies: California

Maritime Academy, Great Lakes Maritime Academy, Texas Maritime Academy, State University of New York (SUNY) Maritime Academy, Merchant Marine Academy, and Massachusetts Maritime Academy. I personally met with the presidents of these schools recently to discuss both our military and civilian opportunities; we have historically looked at these schools solely as sources for our officer corps. We continue a strong relationship with King's Point. Thus far we have 45 applicant resumes this year and are set to start next year's recruiting cycle this spring. We will support our field commanders in their engagement with these schools and in providing diverse pools for their vacancies.

District Commanders will be reinforcing both our non-rate initiative and civilian hiring needs in unit visits.

OUTREACH AND RECRUITING

As I noted in my testimony last September, the majority of our diversity action plan is tactically focused and weighted toward outreach and recruiting. In addition to the civilian actions already mentioned for marine safety to bring a more diverse perspective to that workforce, we have made progress in a number of other areas:

Members of the Coast Guard's senior leadership are establishing relationships with minority serving institutions. For example, Flags and Senior Executive Service members are working with campus leadership and faculty at Morgan State, North Carolina A&T, Alabama A&M, Hampton University, Morris College, University of Texas at El Paso and the University of Texas at San Antonio. In partnership with the National Naval Officers Association (NNOA), we established an "Ambassadors Program" at schools such as Prairie View A&M, Norfolk State, Hampton University, Jackson State, Lemoyne Owen, Spellman College, South Carolina State, and Bowie State. Our 'ambassadors' are typically alumni of those schools and help provide peer-to-peer type engagement opportunities and liaison to Flag/SES activities on campus. We are aggressively pursuing outreach with several Alaskan Native Tribal Councils and planning a career fair at the 2-year Native Alaskan School in Barrow. The Flag officer responsible for Alaska has just completed a visit to that school to provide support to those students and tribal officials to raise awareness of all Coast Guard military and civilian employment opportunities.

The Coast Guard MUST be in the field reaching out to people from diverse backgrounds and cultures to provide opportunity awareness. In FY 2009, I directed \$400 thousand (of the \$1.4 million) to triple the funding provided to this critical function. In late FY 2009, we will beta test a pilot Executive Outreach Management System (EOMS) to track, coordinate, report, and measure return on investment of these outreach activities. Meanwhile, we continue to manually capture and present information and data pertinent to our outreach contact hours. I am pleased to report that we are very active in the field as we compete for America's talent. This year alone, we will participate in 40 events such as the Thurgood Marshall College Fund Conference, the Annual Hispanic Professional Engineers Conference, the Black Engineer of the Year Award STEM Conference, the East Coast Asian American Student Union Conference, the Women of Color in Technology Conference, Women's Leadership Symposium, and the Annual Society of American Indian Government Employees Conference. These efforts will increase the exposure of the Coast Guard 'brand' to thousands of future Coast Guard men and women.

During Flag, SES, and 'ambassador' engagements, we raised the visibility of opportunities that include our re-focused College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative (CSPI) Scholarship program. This is to ensure greater visibility at minority serving institutions of the tremendous educational and career opportunities. This program provides for up to 60 participants at any

given time. CSPI provides two years of college tuition, military pay and benefits, and a guaranteed attendance at Officer Candidate School upon graduation. CSPI has a proven track record. 33 percent of the African-Americans holding the rank of Commander (O-5) now serving on active duty entered the Service through this initiative. As more and more students begin their pursuit of higher education at 2-year community colleges, we are in the early stages of targeting this market and strongly believe that CSPI is our niche program. 48 percent of the current CSPI students are minority and 38 percent are female.

The Coast Guard Academy has launched a targeted advertising and promotional initiative in the New York City metropolitan area through Clear Channel Communications. This integrated radio, web, and college promotional program specifically targets college bound African-American students.

The Coast Guard Academy Admissions Office is currently executing a supplemental spring cadet candidate search, targeting approximately 30,000 additional prospects from under-represented minorities. The expected outcome is a larger minority inquiry pool for the Class of 2014 and beyond. This effort includes expanded travel into markets with potential for growth in Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, Mississippi, and Texas.

The Academy Introduction Mission (AIM) Partnership has been enhanced to include 50 fully funded scholarships for eligible minority participants in the 2009 program. Partners include: University of Texas at San Antonio; College of Technology, MAST, FL; Montgomery Blair High School, MD; Springbrook HS, MD; Charles Herbert Flowers HS, MD; North Carolina School for Science and Math; Illinois Math Science Academy; Mississippi Military Academy; and three New London, CT area high schools. The planned outcome is more minority student participation in summer 2009 and an enriched Academy class of 2014 applicant pool. Two feasibility studies will be conducted in 2009 to assess the viability of satellite AIM programs in Alabama and New Mexico or Texas to take advantage of growing minority populations in those areas.

The Academy is currently planning to host 80 educators from under represented school systems during an upcoming series of on-site workshops and familiarity visits. The Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Teacher Summer Program will be launched this summer in partnership with the Wosczyzna-Birch Group, a Hartford, CT based National Science Foundation funded partner. The Academy will also host 24 STEM teachers from inner city school systems to provide them with a one-week STEM enrichment program while exposing them to the Academy and providing a glimpse into cadet life. The expected outcome will be increased student referrals from these high school faculties. The latest market research shows that over 50 percent of high school guidance counselors have no knowledge of the Coast Guard Academy. This effort will help close that gap as we develop further partnerships and build ongoing relations with these secondary school systems.

The exportable Coast Guard Academy Robotics on the Water (AROW) Program combines technology, youth and outreach. Recently developed, it has been used to successfully engage Hartford, CT-based under-represented students with an interest in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education. A mobile version of AROW was deployed to Antilles High School in Puerto Rico over spring break by five cadets from the Academy's Hispanic cultural awareness "Compañeros Council".

The Academy is exporting the successful campus-based diversity program entitled Students of All Races (SOAR). Two admissions officers are currently convening spring workshops targeting

potential cadets in Houston, TX; Mobile, AL; San Juan, PR; San Diego, CA; and Miami, FL to increase awareness of the Coast Guard Academy.

I am optimistic that future classes starting with 2014 will benefit from the many investments being made in telling the Coast Guard Academy story to the most diverse student populations in America.

For our civilian workforce: the Career Entry-Level Opportunity (CEO) program is a 2-year intern program designed to provide a skilled and diverse workforce. Since the 2002 inception of the CEO Program, there have been 56 entry level hires into the program; 48 percent have been minority hires. We developed a methodology to expand this program within our workforce growth efforts.

The Minority Serving Institutions Internship Program (MSIIP) provides fully paid internship opportunities. Stipend paid interns work during the spring, summer, and fall months in Coast Guard locations nationwide. Since the fall of 2006 we have had sixty-one undergraduate and graduate students; 84 percent of the participants have been minority students. Some of these opportunities are now being linked to our Flag/SES college outreach initiative.

We interact with students long before they are ready to consider entering the workforce. The primary focus is assisting in the pursuit of educational excellence and supporting interest in science, technology, engineering, and math. Clearly this helps create greater awareness of opportunities we can offer as these young Americans develop dreams, aspirations and prepare for their futures. We are very proud of our joint efforts with Ms. Dickerson and the Civil Rights staff to support and expand Partnership in Education activities in schools such as the Maritime Industries Academy in Baltimore, MD and others throughout the country.

RETENTION

Retention and career development go hand-in-hand. The only way to improve diversity at senior military levels is to grow it. We are taking action to ensure that junior officers, enlisted personnel and civilians receive the coaching and mentoring necessary to advance and promote. Our Diversity Strategic Group recommended changes to the way we report the performance and provide counsel for our officers. Since I last testified, I have directed changes to our Officer Evaluation System to ensure our officers are counseled on their evaluations and that the counseling is documented.

Although all of our leadership courses include blocks on mentoring and counseling, we will leverage the professional development opportunities at affinity group conferences to provide a counseling module for all Coast Guard attendees.

To help junior officers, and mid-grade members (both officer and enlisted) also, stay on track for success, Individual Development Plans will be required. We currently have 38 units participating in a pilot program on the “how to” roll this program out across the Coast Guard. Developing and retaining the mid-grade officers and petty officers is key to growing a diverse senior officer and petty officer corps.

Our analysis of the civilian workforce found opportunities to improve training and developmental programs for our civilian workforce. We’ve since aggressively marketed those programs to raise awareness and promote the wide-ranging avenues for our civilians.

Our flag and senior executives recognize and promote talent within our officer corps. Their commitment to diversity is demonstrated in the representation on the flag and senior executives' personal staffs - key developmental positions of Deputy, Executive Assistant at the captain (O-6), commander (O-5) and Admiral's Aide at the junior officer grades. Minority and women officers in these positions (25 percent of the senior positions and 34 percent of the junior positions) are higher than their overall representation in our Service.

Feedback Loops: The Commandant's Diversity Advisory Council (DAC) and Leadership Advisory Council (LAC) meet semi-annually with Admiral Allen to provide 'truth to power' and immediate senior leadership 360-degree feedback. The DAC and LAC also provide a forum for a reality check that reviews current diversity policies and execution plans. Many items on our current tactical level Diversity Action Plan were validated by the diverse representatives of the DAC and LAC. Both Councils have members sourced nationally from the Total Workforce—active duty, reserve, civilian, officer/enlisted, and Auxiliary members who serve in this collateral duty for 2 years.

Mr. Chairman, at my September testimony, you stated "It is imperative that the Coast Guard's diversity initiatives form a cohesive tactical plan designed to implement specific diversity goals." We agree. We used both our existing, though dated diversity strategy, input from affinity groups and the diversity action committee, and a career continuum to establish our action plan. I also directed a new Leadership and Diversity Management Strategy be developed to operationalize the Commandant's Diversity Policy Statement. That vision drives our mission to recruit, retain, and fully support, a ready, capable, diverse, and high-quality military and civilian workforce. The strategy will be a living document to institutionalize our actions and commitment to diversity.

SUMMARY

Chairman Cummings, total workforce diversity is vitally important to the Coast Guard. I have described some of our current actions in this testimony that will result in advancement on our diversity journey. We are continually measuring our recruiting and retention progress to assess if we are on the correct upward trends to achieve a much improved workforce demographic representation.

Comparing 2003 and 2008, the representation of females in the officer corps is up 2.7 percentage points and the representation of officer minorities is up 2.3 percentage points (see figure 1). In the enlisted workforce, the representation of females is up 1.4 percentage points, while the minority representation is up 6.9 percentage points (see figure 3). During this six-year period, the actual numbers of females and minorities in the military increased by 23.6 percent and 45.6 percent, respectively, in a period where the overall military workforce grew by 8.4 percent. The permanent civilian workforce, however, has been trending in the opposite direction over the same period. Despite increasing the actual numbers of females and minorities between 2003 and 2008 (+8.6 percent and +10.2 percent, respectively), these increases did not keep pace with the 20.2 percent growth in the civilian workforce. As a result, the female representation dropped by 3.6 percentage points and the minority representation dropped by 2.1 percentage points (see figure 4). I have directed additional analysis of our civilian workforce trends to develop courses of action to keep us moving in the right direction.

If we consider the projected year 2050 datum as a broadly defined end-state, we have a long way to go when the minority representation of our military workforce is 23.4 percent (Officer Corps

16.9 percent, Chief Warrant Officers 16.2 percent and Enlisted Workforce 25.0 percent) and the minority representation of the civilian workforce is 23.5 percent.

Mr. Chairman, please be assured that the Coast Guard is committed to improving the diversity of our Service. We are taking action—tactical and strategic. I am personally committed and optimistic that the seeds of our aggressive outreach actions will germinate, sprout, and grow—if we nurture the required social networks in the field. Sustainability is key and we are committed. The Coast Guard needs your continued support to stay on course. We do have challenges ahead and we recognize them. We have developed a plan to address those challenges and are taking bold and decisive action to execute that plan. I'll be happy to provide periodic reports on our progress.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to your questions.

Figure 1 Officer Diversity

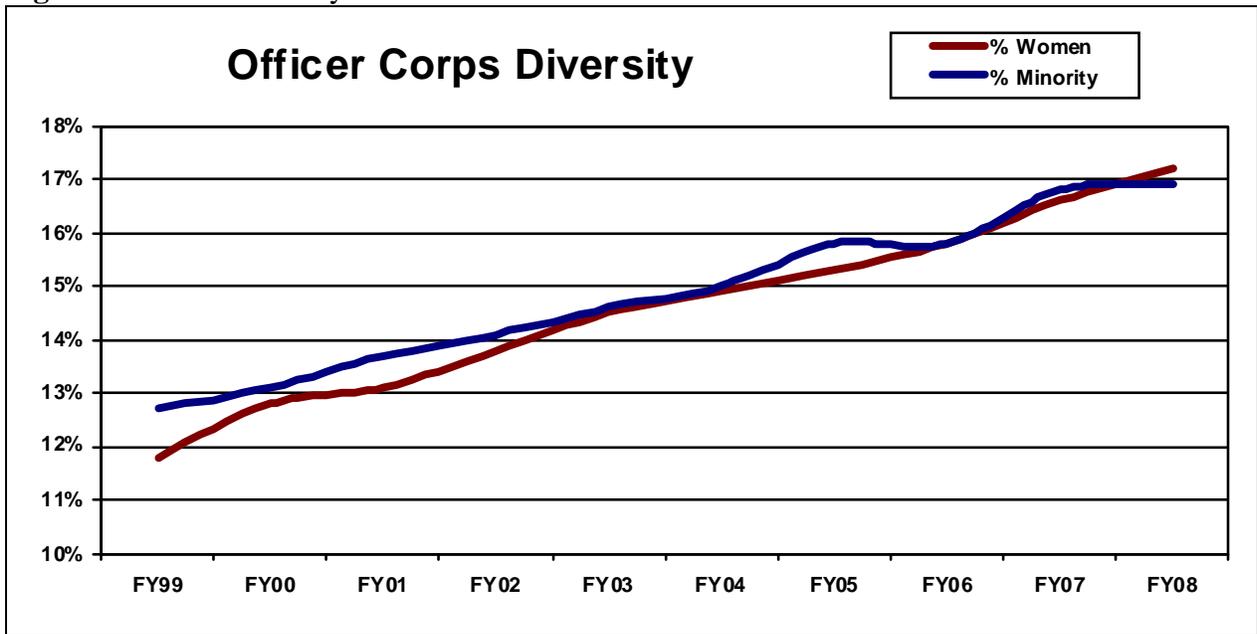


Figure 2 CWO Diversity

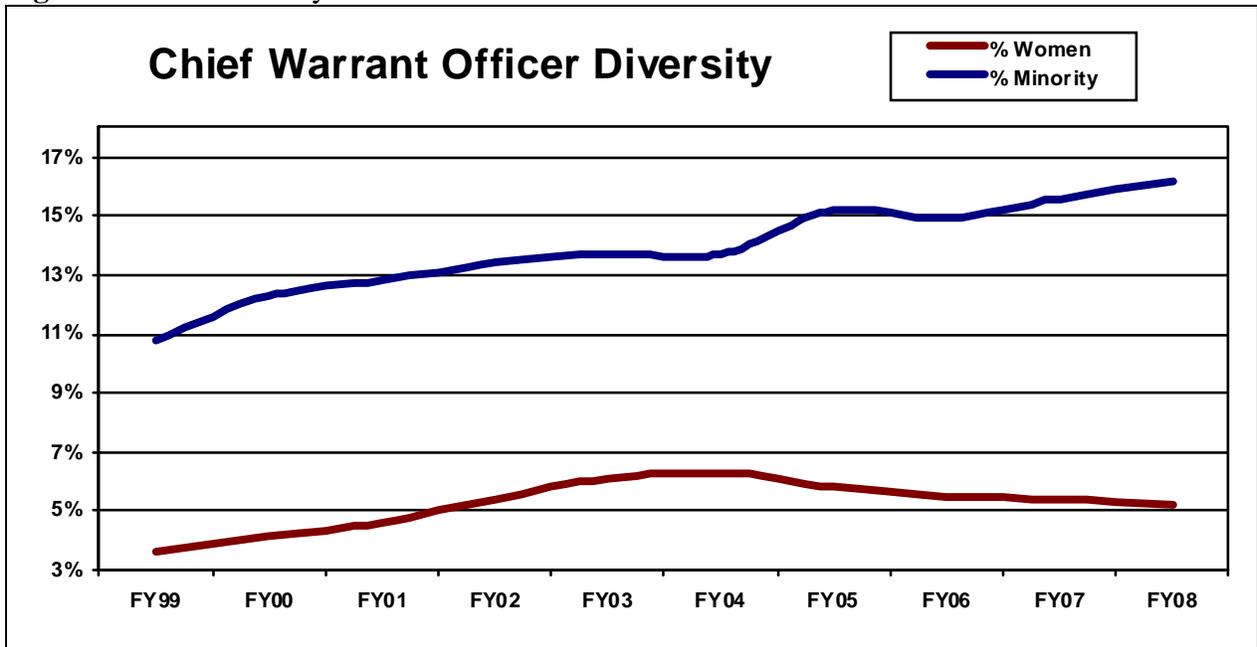


Figure 3 Enlisted Diversity

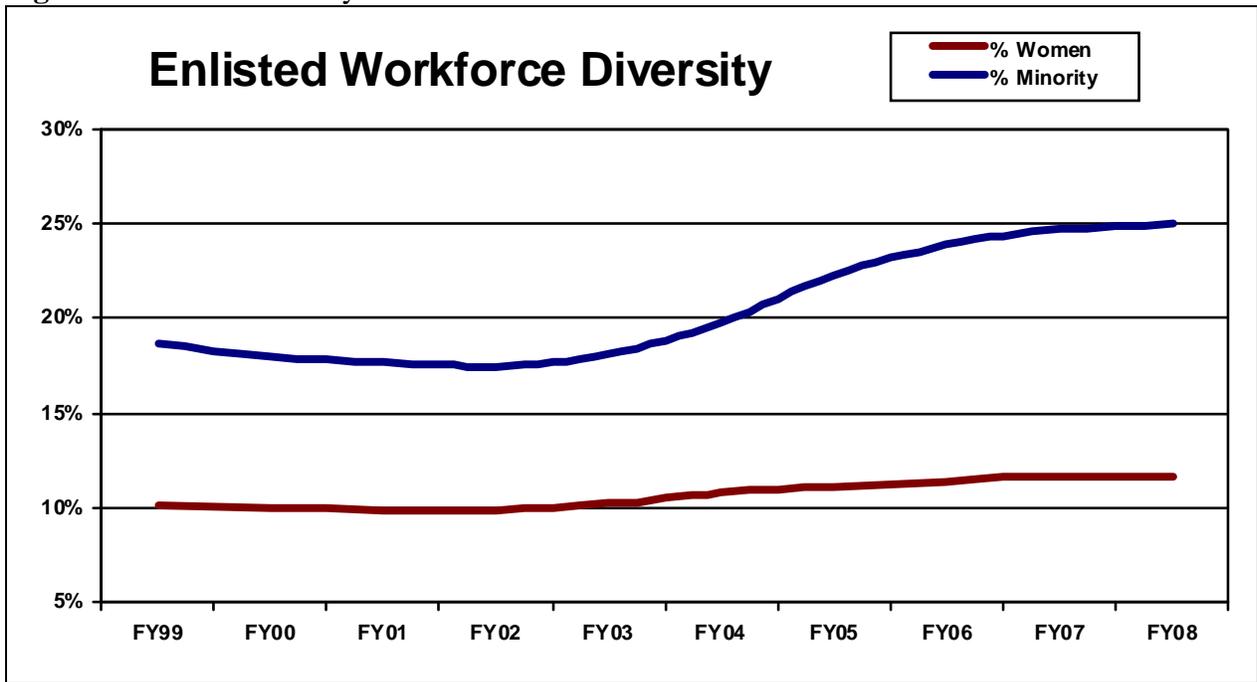


Figure 4 Civilian Diversity

