

Remarks to President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services, January 12, 1949. President's Secretary's File, Truman Papers.

DRAFT

12 O'clock Noon
12 January 1949

TO THE COMMITTEE ON EQUALITY OF TREATMENT
AND OPPORTUNITY IN THE ARMED SERVICES:

Considering it essential that there be maintained in the armed services of the United States the highest standards of democracy, I have declared it to be the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin.

In Executive Order No. 9981, dated July 26, 1948, I directed that this policy should be put into effect as rapidly as possible. By this same executive order, I created the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services. I am happy to welcome you, each of you, to the tasks and opportunities which now become yours.

Our total national economy demands the most effective utilization of the services of every citizen. Likewise it is the privilege and responsibility of every citizen to make the maximum possible contribution to our national strength. The concept of democracy that our nation represents to the peoples of the world demands that there be equality of treatment and opportunity in the armed services as well as in all other phases of our national life.

It occurs to me that under the guidance of your chairman, the Committee will wish to make a comprehensive survey of the past and present status and service of the Negro citizen in the armed services.



You will find that the services have themselves been developing plans for improving the utilization of all minorities.

It is my profound desire that the work of this Committee shall yield results which will be not simply a report, but a set of operable plans, a blueprint, for constructive action.

The national security requires that you make your contribution, consistent with the fundamental rights of all men, toward the full development of the strength of our country.



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JULY 26, 1948

EXECUTIVE ORDER

9981ESTABLISHING THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON
EQUALITY OF TREATMENT AND OPPORTUNITY IN
THE ARMED SERVICES

WHEREAS it is essential that there be maintained in the armed services of the United States the highest standards of democracy, with equality of treatment and opportunity for all those who serve in our country's defense:

NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States, by the Constitution and the statutes of the United States, and as Commander in Chief of the armed services, it is hereby ordered as follows:

1. It is hereby declared to be the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin. This policy shall be put into effect as rapidly as possible, having due regard to the time required to effectuate any necessary changes without impairing efficiency or morale.

2. There shall be created in the National Military Establishment an advisory committee to be known as the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services, which shall be composed of seven members to be designated by the President.

3. The Committee is authorized on behalf of the President to examine into the rules, procedures and practices of the armed services in order to determine in what respect such rules, procedures and practices may be altered or improved with a view to carrying out the policy of this order. The Committee shall confer and advise with the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Navy, and the Secretary of the Air Force, and shall make such recommendations to the President and to said Secretaries as in the judgment of the Committee will effectuate the policy hereof.



4. All executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government are authorized and directed to cooperate with the Committee in its work, and to furnish the Committee such information or the services of such persons as the Committee may require in the performance of its duties.

5. When requested by the Committee to do so, persons in the armed services or in any of the executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government shall testify before the Committee and shall make available for the use of the Committee **such documents** and other information as the Committee may require.

6. The Committee shall continue to exist until such time as the President shall terminate its existence by Executive order.

HARRY S. TRUMAN

THE WHITE HOUSE

July 26, 1948
