



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

MAR 01 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE PERSONNEL

SUBJECT: Reaffirming Our Values and Ethical Conduct

As members of the Department of Defense who serve in or support the most powerful military in the world, we represent not only the determination of our country to secure its interests, but also the core values upon which this country and our armed forces were founded.

None of those values is new to us: honesty, integrity, character and selflessness all rank high on the list.

I know you treasure these values just as much as I do. I know you believe in them just as much as you believe in the oath you took – the promise you made – when you raised your right hand to serve. And I know I can count on you to conduct yourselves always in a manner that leaves no doubt of your fidelity.

That is the essence of ethical conduct. It is the work of making tangible our core values. It means demonstrating in real and meaningful ways the degree to which we take seriously our role as good stewards of the taxpayers' dollars and of their trust and confidence. And it means rededicating ourselves, constantly, to the privilege of being public servants.

I share President Biden's commitment to restoring and maintaining public trust in government.

But just as we cannot take our military might for granted, neither can we take ethical conduct for granted. We must practice and exercise ethical decision-making in the same manner and with the same alacrity that we practice and exercise other professional skills. It must become a daily task, a habit, if you will.

To that end, I offer here my expectations, for you and for me:

- All Department personnel, who are required to complete annual ethics training, shall do so no later than November 30 of this year. I expect leaders at every level to remain personally involved in leading this training.
- We will ensure the Department's financial and operational processes, reporting, systems, and data are accurate, reliable, and secure. As part of this commitment, we will continue to manage risks through the Risk Management and Internal Control Program.
- We will assess our work processes and the effectiveness of current internal controls in preventing fraud, waste, and abuse. And we will report and fix any problems we encounter along the way.



OSD001494-21/CMD002358-21

- Finally, we will make ethical decision-making an integral part of our daily conversations, meetings, and engagements. We must ask ourselves at every point in our processes and procedures: Is this the right thing to do...and are we going about it in the right way?

Every day and in all things, it is within our power to choose how we live up to our core values and the expectations of our fellow citizens. I know you share my commitment to making those choices in the most stringent – indeed, the most ethical – of ways.

As I said on my first day in office, I am proud to be on your team.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roy G. Hunt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.