Memorandum

Date: May 26, 2020

From: Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration/Operations, Security and Preparedness (006)

Subj: Special Observances for Calendar Year 2020 (VIEWS #02441920)

To: Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries and Other Key Officials

1. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) commemorates certain days, weeks and months designated as “special observances.” Those dates are reflected in the attached VA schedule of Special Observances for Calendar Year 2020. These observances are held each year in compliance with Executive Order 11478, 29 CFR Part 1614.102(b)(4), joint Congressional Resolutions, Presidential Proclamations and the Department’s goals as articulated in VA’s Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2017-2020.

2. Please note that some calendar year 2020 special observances in the attached document have already transpired. The COVID-19 pandemic will likely continue to impact participation in these special observances as well as the cancellation of the related commemorative events as noted on the attached schedule of special observances for calendar year 2020.

3. I strongly encourage all managers and supervisors to be on the forefront of these invaluable special observances by supporting activities and establishing strategic partnerships focused on addressing identified challenges faced by the group(s) the specific observance is focused on, such as, race, ethnicity, gender, disability status or other special emphasis program (SEP) areas. The Department will benefit through your participation by helping to address specific challenges, to increase participation of groups with historically low participation in the VA’s workforce, to attain higher retention of talented staff and to associate positive outcomes for Veterans health and benefits services.

4. As leaders, we model the VA’s Core Values of integrity, commitment, advocacy, respect and excellence through participation in special observances and in demonstrating our commitments and belief in the value that each employee brings to the Department. Information about special observances may be found on this website: https://www.diversity.va.gov/calendar/default.aspx. Each observance has a designated SEP manager who can answer your questions about specific observances and activities. They may be contacted at odi@va.gov, or 202-461-4131.

5. Thank you for your continued support for these special observances.

Daniel R. Sitterly
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Attachments
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month/Date of Observance</th>
<th>U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Special Observances for Calendar Year 2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 20</td>
<td>Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Black History Month</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Women’s History Month</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Asian Pacific American Heritage Month</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>LGBT Pride Month</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 26</td>
<td>Women’s Equality Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 15 – October 15</td>
<td>Hispanic Heritage Month</td>
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<td>October</td>
<td>Disability Employment Awareness Month</td>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Native American Heritage Month</td>
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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Suggested activities include, but are not restricted to the following:

- Announcement by the field facility director requesting participation and support of all managers, supervisors and employees for the special program activities through email and/or SharePoint Website.

- Online Presentations, workshops and seminars for managers, supervisors and employees on Diversity Programs.

- Share training and career development opportunities for your employees of all race, ethnicity, gender and disability backgrounds.

- Plan webinars by guest speakers such as community leaders, representatives from local government, professional organizations and academia on diversity.

- Identification of “best practices” through sharing between field facilities who promote diversity in the workplace.

- Coordinate with organizations for webinars including, but not limited to: Blacks in Government (BIG), Blinded Veterans Association (BVA), Federally Employed Women (FEW), League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) and Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) to encourage qualified individuals to apply for positions at VA for a diverse applicant pool. Additional diversity outreach venues and organizations can be found at: http://www.diversity.va.gov/org/default.aspx.

- Coordinate webinars with minority-serving institutions in your local area, such as Historically Black College Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), Asian American and Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AAPISIs) and Tribal College and Universities (TCUs).

- Share direct quotes and stories in relation to the theme of the special observance, such as sharing stories and direct quotes from the LGBT community for LGBT Pride Month.

- Online programs and award ceremonies to honor outstanding employees who have contributed to diversity and resolved conflicts in the workplace.

- Online mentoring programs at the facility level for managers, supervisors, employees and interns.

- Share local facility newsletters, handouts and literature in your facility or office through email.

Office of Human Resources and Administration/Operations, Security and Preparedness
Office of Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion
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