



Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

Peter A. DeFazio
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August 26, 2020

Admiral Karl L. Schultz
Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. SE
Washington, D.C. 20593

Dear Admiral Schultz:

It has come to our attention that there is an offensive mnemonic device circulating in U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) certified training material. Within the USCG accredited captain's license course offered by "Mariners Learning System," students are encouraged to use the mnemonic device "true virgins make dull company—just add whiskey" to remember how to calculate compass error. We are sure you will agree that the use of this crude phrase in certification materials approved by the Coast Guard is unacceptable.

Not only is it inappropriate, but the encouraged use of this phrase helps to perpetuate a culture where sexual assault or harassment is deemed acceptable in the maritime industry. As a result, we request that you initiate a formal review of all certification materials used or approved by the Coast Guard to identify and remove any use of this specific phrase or other lewd or inappropriate mnemonic devices, phrases, idioms or expressions. We urge you to complete this review within 90 days upon receipt of this letter, and upon completion of your review, that you provide a summary report and briefing to the Committee. In addition, we ask that you rescind approval of all training material containing this offensive phrase until this review is completed.

It is vital that the agency overseeing the maritime industry set a tone of acceptance and inclusion for all of industry to emulate and foster a maritime culture free of discrimination, harassment, or violence based on race, gender or sexual identification.

Thank you for your consideration of and attention to this request. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact David Jansen, Staff Director, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation.

Sincerely,



Peter A. DeFazio
Chair



Sean Patrick Maloney
Chair
Subcommittee on Coast Guard
and Maritime Transportation