



THE UNDER SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-1000

September 12, 2023

The Honorable Tommy H. Tuberville  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Tuberville:

Thank you for your letter of May 3, 2023, regarding the Navy's Digital Ambassador Pilot Program. I am responding on behalf of the Secretary of the Navy.

The Navy Digital Ambassador Pilot Program was designed as a six-month pilot under the Navy Chief of Information's authority with the goal of expanding outreach about the Navy's mission to a wider demographic audience. The Navy instituted the pilot program in October 2022 with several active duty Navy Sailors who had large followings on their personal social media accounts to expand outreach. The Sailors who participated shared their authentic and diverse Navy stories with pride in their naval service and reached Americans who may have little knowledge of, or experience with, the Navy. In April 2023, the pilot program concluded and will not be continued.

The Navy abides by applicable law restricting the use of TikTok on official devices. While some of the Sailors who were invited to participate in the pilot program had personal social media presence on TikTok, none of the Sailors were issued an official device by the Navy Chief of Information for their participation in the pilot program. The Navy will continue to communicate to Sailors regarding the national security risks associated with their use of TikTok on personal devices and ensure that social media training for recruiters and public affairs officers further emphasizes those risks.

The Navy provided no financial incentives or compensation to participants in the pilot program, with one exception. The Navy expended \$1,701.12 for the cost of travel of one Navy Digital Ambassador to attend the 2022 Army-Navy football game. This Navy Digital Ambassador partnered with a civilian influencer and, through this outreach, reached 377,128 Instagram users, 76% of whom did not previously follow the official Navy Instagram page.

The Navy learned lessons from the pilot program that will inform our digital engagement and outreach going forward. The Navy is committed to a professional workplace of honor, courage, and commitment, and our digital outreach efforts strive to embody those core values. Our digital outreach efforts will maintain the important distinction between Sailors' official activities and their personal lives. The Department of the Navy will continue to seek appropriate and effective use of digital mediums to access a broad, diverse public audience in an effort to increase understanding of the Navy.

To defend our country and win its wars, the ranks of the U.S. military must remain open to all qualified patriots who seek to serve. I have confidence that our Service Members are prepared to meet our Nation's challenges today and in the future. We are proud of the service of every Service Member who takes the oath to put their life on the line in defense of our country, and their families who make their service possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erik K. Raven", with a stylized, flowing script.

Erik K. Raven