



Air Force Academy Defends Telling Cadets to Replace ‘Mom and Dad’ With ‘Gender-Neutral Language’

Description

The U.S. Air Force Academy has defended its teaching cadets to avoid “gender-specific terms” such as “mom” or “dad,” saying that “inclusive language” is important to its mission of training leaders capable of winning wars.

The Colorado Springs-based military school recently met with criticism over a slide that instructs cadets to replace gender-specific terms with gender-neutral ones. For example, “partner” is considered a better alternative to “boyfriend” or “girlfriend.” Terms like “parents,” “caregivers,” and “guardians” are preferable to “mom” or “dad.”

To be “inclusive,” cadets should also avoid saying that they are “colorblind” or that they “don’t see color” or “we’re all just people,” according to the slide.

A screenshot of the slide, which is part of a training titled “Diversity and Inclusion: What it is, why we care, and what we can do,” was shared with Fox News by Rep. Mike Waltz (R-Fla.), an Afghan War veteran and vocal critic of “wokeness” in the U.S. military.

“It’s been a tradition in the military to get letters from Mom and Dad or your boyfriend and girlfriend for as long as there’s been a military,” Waltz told Fox News. “Now we’re instructing every cadet entering the Air Force to not say ‘mom’ and ‘dad,’ to not say ‘boyfriend’ or ‘girlfriend’ and this kind of drive towards gender neutrality.”

“I think the Air Force should be worried about the ‘macroaggressions’ against America that are happening all over the world,” he added in a mocking reference to “microaggression,” a term leftists use for behaviors they see as unintentional or indirect discrimination against members of a marginalized group.

Academy’s Response

In response to criticism, the Academy said the language of the slide was taken out of context and

“misrepresented.”

“The Air Force Academy does not prohibit the use of ‘Mom and Dad’ or other gender-specific terms,” the Academy said in a statement. “The slide in question was not intended to stand alone.”

The slide, according to the Academy, was intended to “demonstrate how respect for others should be used to build inclusive teams, producing more effective warfighting units.”

“USAFA develops leaders of character that can lead diverse teams of Airmen and Guardians inclusively, to enhance innovation and win future conflict,” the Academy said. “It is the diversity of Airmen and Guardians coming from all corners of our nation who perform the Department of the Air Force’s hundreds of critical mission sets that make us the best, most innovative Air and Space Forces the world has ever known.”

In another slide shared by Waltz, cadets are referred to the Academy’s “Diversity & Inclusion Reading Room” for additional “resources” on the topic. That room, according to a February 2021 [news release](#), is a “safe space” intended to “broaden and deepen exploration of the issues involved in diversity, inclusion and justice.”

“Mark Jensen, president of the Academy’s faculty senate and a philosophy professor, said the reading room is the result of teamwork between faculty members and the Academy’s ongoing Critical Conversation series that formed in the wake of George Floyd’s Death,” the Academy reported at that time.

Communist Tactics

Waltz, who is a ranking member of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness, shared with Fox a particular concern that the program’s structure appears to create a “separate, parallel chain of command.”

“To those of us who are a little bit older, it reminds us of what the Soviets used to do or what the Chinese do today, where they literally have political commissars inserted at every level end of the chain of command, but they have a separate reporting chain to ensure that the military is abiding by their ideology and their political doctrine,” Waltz said.

“Not only do they have diversity and equity officers in the cadet chain of command, they wear a special insignia, which is exactly what the political commissars—they would wear an armband in both the Soviet army and now in the Chinese Communist military. I just think there are some really alarming parallels.”

by Bill Pan

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