



Merit Systems Protection Board

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The Merit Systems Protection Board Celebrates its First Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month

On Tuesday, June 23, 2009, Chairman Neil A. G. McPhie presided at the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board's (MSPB) first commemoration of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) month. In his introduction of the keynote speaker, Office of Personnel Management (OPM) General Counsel Elaine Kaplan, Chairman McPhie stated that, "All Americans need to educate themselves and become more aware of the valuable contributions that our LGBT citizens add to the richness of the American fabric. It is through awareness and education that we build tolerance and understanding."

During her address to an overflow crowd of MSPB employees, including video conferencing with its Regional Offices, Ms. Kaplan recounted the history of discrimination against gay and lesbian Federal employees over the years and the progress that has been made in building a Federal workplace free of discrimination based on sexual orientation. Ms. Kaplan highlighted the recent changes in Federal benefits for domestic partners announced by President Obama in an Oval Office ceremony last week and noted the administration's strong commitment to supporting pending legislation that would guarantee full domestic partnership benefits to LGBT Federal employees.

Ms. Kaplan recalled one poignant moment in last week's Oval Office meeting with LGBT leaders. After signing the order extending certain domestic partnership benefits to LGBT Federal employees, President Obama presented the pen to longtime gay activist and former Federal employee Franklin Kameny. In 1957, Mr. Kameny, now 84, was fired from his position as an Astronomer from the Army Map Service because of his sexual orientation. Ms. Kaplan related that "I had a lump in my throat" when she witnessed this moving ceremony and reflected on the significance of the President's action in taking another step toward securing the civil rights of LGBT Federal employees.

The MSPB is an independent, quasi-judicial agency with responsibility for deciding Federal employee appeals from personnel actions taken against them, protecting the integrity of the civil service and other Federal merit systems, and conducting studies of the civil service and other merit systems in the Executive Branch. Please visit the MSPB at its website at www.mspb.gov.

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