

REPRESENT

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

OCTOBER 2020

Welcome to *Represent*

Here in the CSIS International Security Program, we have been [reflecting](#) for months on how we can make national security a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive place. One place to start is the inclusivity of the profession. National security careers have, for too long, been inaccessible to many Americans. For decades, study after study has revealed how dramatically under-representative the field is of the country whose security we work to protect. Although some parts of our professional community are making progress, others still lag behind.

There are many reasons to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in American national security. One of the reasons motivating us is that genius can be anywhere. At a time when we need every gifted mind focused on challenges like climate change and conflict, arbitrarily excluding talent is a national security threat. From the classroom to the boardroom, we need to invest in everyone who wants to pursue a national security career, not just those who already have the connections, privilege, and opportunity to do so.

As part of this [commitment to DEI](#), we are introducing *Represent*, an ongoing essay series where some of the most thoughtful and talented professionals in national security share their stories and provide their recommendations to improve America's national security. Recognizing that the core of this challenge is in racial equity and justice, we focus on the careers and experiences of Americans of color. But we also acknowledge and explore the broad range of diversity too long suppressed from our national security discussions.

In this week's launch of *Represent* on Defense360, you will find essays on the experiences of those working in national security who are Black, Brown, women, transgender and gender non-conforming, differently abled, and more. We asked our authors to offer the personal reflections, analyses, or culture and policy recommendations they most wanted to convey.

Our goal is to continue the ongoing conversations about the difficult problems our community faces and to surface solutions while amplifying diverse perspectives. We hope you will take the time to read and reflect on the views shared in this series and join us in working towards a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive national security establishment.

Sincerely,

The Editorial Board of *Represent*:

Christine Brazeau, Suzanne Claeys, Seamus P. Daniels, Alice Hunt Friend, Kaitlyn Johnson, and Simone Williams