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## Christopher E. Díaz



### Chief of Staff to the Secretary of the Navy

Chris Diaz was sworn in as Chief of Staff to the Secretary of the Navy in June of 2022. In this role, Chris is responsible for leading the Department of the Navy to achieve the Secretary’s strategic priorities—working in close partnership with senior executives across the Department, overseeing daily operations of the Secretary’s office, and collaborating with partners across the Department of Defense and throughout the federal government.

Prior to joining the Department of Defense, Chris served as the Department of Veterans Affairs Deputy Chief of Staff and White House Liaison where he was responsible for managing senior departmental personnel actions, supporting governance oversight and policy development and implementation. He also served as VA’s Acting Chief of Staff during the critical first 100 Days of the Biden-Harris Administration. During the Biden-Harris Presidential Transition, Chris served as the Executive Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs Agency Review Team responsible for assessment of the agency’s structure, personnel, and policies to prepare the President-elect and incoming senior Administration officials.

Chris is a Veteran of the United States Navy having served from 2007 to 2012 as an Aviation Boatswain’s Mate and, then, as a Fleet Marine Corps Hospital Corpsman. He saw duty aboard the USS Harry S. Truman and, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, deployed with the 6th Marines to Marjah in the Helmand Province of Afghanistan.

After leaving the Navy, Chris graduated *magna cum laude* from Drexel University in 2015 with Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in Psychology. His research and clinical focus were in military and performance psychology. At Drexel, Chris joined other Veterans to revitalize the school’s Veterans’ group, gaining national recognition from Student Veterans of America (SVA). Additionally, Chris was the recipient of the prestigious Pat Tillman Scholarship, awarded to Veterans and Veteran family members with a proven track record of dedication and perseverance and a commitment to strengthening communities at home and around the world.

Mr. Diaz once said, “I want to change the world through individual relationships.” To that end, he is a published author, dynamic speaker, and Veteran advocate. He was the 2016 founder and former executive director of the Veteran-led Action Tank—a Philadelphia-based nonprofit leveraging Veterans’ experience, leadership, and relationships with service-minded citizens to tackle challenges like the opioid crisis, gun violence, and food insecurity. For these and other initiatives, Mr. Diaz gained national recognition. He received the 2018 South by Southwest (SXSW) Community Service Award, and, in 2019,

the Aspen Ideas Fellowship for his work, accomplishments, and ability to transform ideas into action. Mr. Diaz has served on numerous boards in Philadelphia, helping shape the region's future.

Chris Diaz lives his life "to remember and honor the sacrifice" of fellow Veterans and "strives to be the best version" of himself. He holds a first-degree black belt in the martial art of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and is continually seeking experiences that force him to grow.

A native New Yorker, Chris lives in Philadelphia with his wife, Jennifer, his son, Rain, and his dog, Upa.