

**July 24, 2020**

## **AAVMC Supports Gender Equity and Civility, Rejects Sexism**

The AAVMC condemns the reported language and tone of the encounter between Rep. Ted Yoho and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez as described in the media. Disrespectful, misogynistic behavior is not acceptable under any circumstance. Veterinarians have a special responsibility to uphold the highest standards of professional conduct and to preserve the dignity of the veterinary medical profession.

Women often hear derogatory and abusive language that is directed at them. This experience is likely familiar to the many women who are veterinarians and veterinary medical students. It is especially important that we publicly affirm the dignity and equality of women to ensure the success of our profession. If we are to be champions of diversity and inclusivity, then we must live those values each and every day, without exception.

We confront and reject all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including those based on gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other differences that have led to misunderstanding, hostility and injustice. At the same time, we welcome diversity of thought and political beliefs; however, basic principles of positive conflict resolution require that we treat one another with courtesy, mutual respect and civility.

Words matter. What we say matters, and the way we say it matters.