

over the act or condition forming the subject matter of the grievance.

(h) *Bureau* means equivalent organizational elements in State and USIA, and includes offices in AID.

(i) *Days* means calendar days.

§ 16.2 General provisions.

(a) *Statement of purpose.* These regulations establish procedures as required by law to provide Foreign Service officers and employees (and their survivors) of the Foreign Affairs agencies, a grievance procedure to insure a full measure of due process, and to provide for the just consideration and resolution of grievances of such officers, employees, and survivors. No regulation promulgated in this part shall be interpreted or applied in any manner which would alter or abridge the provisions of the due process established by the Congress in Pub. L. 94-141, 22 U.S.C. 1037, section 691.

(b) *Discussion of complaints.* (1) Every effort should be made to settle any employee complaint informally, promptly, and satisfactorily.

(2) Supervisors and other responsible officers should encourage employees to discuss complaints with them and should respond in a timely manner to resolve the complaints.

(3) An employee initially should discuss a complaint with the employee's current supervisor or with the responsible officer who has immediate jurisdiction over the complaint to give that person an opportunity to resolve the matter, before further steps are taken under these procedures.

(c) *Guidance.* Nothing in these procedures prevents a grievant from seeking guidance from any official who might be helpful respecting the submission of a grievance or its resolution.

(d) *Freedom of action.* (1) Any grievant, witness, representative or other person involved in a proceeding hereunder shall be free from any restraint, interference, coercion, harassment, discrimination, or reprisal in those proceedings or by virtue of them. The Foreign Affairs agencies recognize their obligation to insure compliance with this section. Any person involved or having immediate knowledge of any alleged breach of this section should call it to the attention of the pertinent for-

eign affairs agency through appropriate channels for corrective action as necessary. Normally such allegations should be brought to the attention of the senior agency official at the post; and at Washington, DC, to the Director, Grievance Staff for State; Chief, Employee Relations Branch for AID and Chief, Employee-Management Relations Division for USIA.

(2) The grievant has the right to a representative of the grievant's own choosing at every stage of the proceedings. The grievant and representative(s) who are under the control, supervision, or responsibility of the Foreign Affairs agencies shall be granted reasonable periods of administrative leave to prepare, to be present, and to present the grievance.

(3) Any witness under the control, supervision, or responsibility of a Foreign Affairs agency shall be granted reasonable periods of administrative leave to appear and testify at any such proceeding.

(4) The Foreign Service Grievance Board established hereunder shall have authority to ensure that no copy of the determination of the agency head or designee to reject a Grievance Board recommendation, no notation of the failure of the Grievance Board to find for the grievant, and no notation that a proceeding is pending or has been held, shall be entered in the personnel records of the grievant (unless by order of the Grievance Board as a remedy for the grievance) or those of any other officer or employee connected the grievance. The Foreign Affairs agencies shall maintain grievance records under appropriate safeguards to preserve confidentiality (§16.9).

§ 16.3 Access to records.

(a) *Grievance Board records.* The grievant and the grievant's representative shall have access to the record of proceedings, including the decision of the Board.

(b) *Agency records.* (1) In considering the validity of a grievance, the Grievance Board shall have access, to the extent permitted by law, to any agency record considered by the Board to be relevant to the grievant and the subject matter of the grievance.