



Legislative Alert #113-14: SUPPORT H.R. 2002 & S. 871, Combating Military Sexual Assault Act
MILITARY

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Issue Background: Sexual assault in the military has been identified by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey, as “a crisis,” which needs an immediate solution. In 2012, there were 26,000 cases of sexual assault estimated by the DOD and only approximately 3,000 of those were reported. Of the 3,000 reported, only 1,108 were investigated and 575 processed. Furthermore, 96 of the 575 processed were court-martialed. This means that despite the large number of sexual assault incidents estimated to occur in the military, a small minority of those crimes is reported, and among them, an even smaller number are processed. This means that oftentimes, victims go unrecognized and perpetrators and predators are left to perform more heinous acts and may never be tried.

Action Required: Contact your Senators and Representatives and urge them to support and cosponsor H.R. 2002, introduced by Representative Tim Ryan (D-OH-17), and S. 871, introduced by Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), Combating Military Sexual Assault Act of 2013, which amends title 10, United States Code, to enhance assistance for victims of sexual assault committed by members of the Armed Forces.

Details (To Be Put Into Letter):

Our military presently faces a crisis. Sexual assault is estimated to have claimed 26,000 victims in the military last year and only 3,000 cases were reported. As it exists today, the Department of Defense (DOD) has yet to establish a formal counsel available for sexual assault victims. Of the 3,000 reported, only 1,108 were investigated and 575 processed. In addition, only 96 of the 575 processed were court-martialed. Noting the serious detriment caused to our warfighters’ security and morale by sexual assault, the Combating Military Sexual Assault Act of 2013 would attempt to create practical measures to reverse the trend and end sexual assault in the ranks.

H.R. 2002 and S. 871 are great bills that seek to create a practical, feasible solution to the crisis of sexual assault in the military. The Combating Military Sexual Assault Act of 2013 would first create a Special Victim’s Counsel, a military lawyer who will assist sexual assault victims through the process. It would also enhance the responsibility and authority of DOD’s Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, to allow it to improve its efforts of regularly tracking and reporting Military Sexual Assault (MSA) statistics, such as assault rate, cases brought to trial, and legislative

and regulatory compliance at the individual services. In addition, sexual assault cases would be referred to the next level of the chain of command or the next superior competent authority in cases where there is a conflict of interest at hand. Finally, the bill would prohibit sexual contact between instructors and trainees within 30 days of completion of basic training or equivalent training program as well as ensuring the availability of Sexual Assault Response Coordinators to the National Guard and Reserve at all times, regardless of operation under Title 10 or Title 32 Authority.

As many sexual assault victims do not come forward due to stigma and fear; the Combating Military Sexual Assault Act of 2013 would help encourage victims to come forward and implement measures to prevent future abuses from occurring.

Take Action: Click the “Take Action” link at the top of the Alert to immediately email and/or write to your Senators and Representatives. This is the quickest and most effective method of expressing your views to Congress. You can also write and/or e-mail the ‘Details’ section or edit as you desire for a more personalized communication . Also, contact friends and family and urge them to use the Contact Congress feature on AUSN’s website as well. Please direct any questions concerning this issue to our Director of Legislation, Anthony Wallis, at 703-548-5800 or at Anthony.Wallis@ausn.org.