



# JULY 2011 SAPR NEWSLETTER



SARC Cheryl Jones - 481-7428  
Assistant Anderal Ward -481-7835

NEW LOCATION: Building 87 Room 174

Crisis 24/7 Hotline

580 649-0656

For more information about program and activities please visit our sharepoint

<https://97amw.portal.altus.af.mil/sites/AMW/sarc/default.aspx>

## Congress moves to protect sex assault victims by Rick Maze

May 19, 2011

Efforts to strengthen protections for military victims of sexual assault are gaining ground in Congress.

The House Armed Services Committee adopted a series of new protections when it passed the 2012 defense authorization bill last week, and similar legislation was introduced Wednesday in the Senate by Sens. John Kerry, D-Mass., and Susan Collins, R-Maine.

Rep. Niki Tsongas, D-Mass., one of the cosponsors of the House sexual assault provisions, said introduction of a Senate bill “will help move this legislation closer to becoming law.”

The House and Senate initiatives are similar, drawn from recommendation of the 2009 final report of the Defense Task Force on Sexual Assault in Military Services to fix flaws in rights and legal protection for assault victims.

Supporters said one in three women leaving the military report experiencing sexual trauma while in the service, but less than 14 percent of sexual assaults in the military are reported to authorities, and only about 8 percent of reported sexual assaults in the military are prosecuted.

“While the military has made strides to address sexual assault in the ranks, victims still report a lack of confidentiality, protection, support, and access to legal counsel once an incident is reported,” said Tsongas.

“Sexual assault has no place anywhere, but especially not in the military, where brave men and women live by a code and rightly pride themselves on honor,” said Kerry, who said he prosecuted sexual assault cases as a prosecutor in Middlesex County, Mass., in the 1970’s.

The House defense policy bill, HR 1540, goes to the House floor next week for debate and amendment. The Kerry-Collins bill, S 1018, was referred to the Senate Armed Services Committee, which will begin writing its version of the defense bill after Memorial Day.

Some proposals are structural, such as elevating the job of director of the Defense Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office so that a flag or general officer or senior executive fills the post, and requiring every brigade or brigade-equivalent unit to have both a full-time sexual assault response coordinator and victim advocate who are trained and certified.

Education about how to prevent sexual assault and what to do if it happens would become even more ingrained in the military. For career service members, training would become part of professional military education, included at each stage of progression through ranks. Training would be required for all civilian employees as well.

The core of the initiatives, however, involves new legal protections:

### UP Coming Events

Male Bystander Intervention  
Gardner Auditorium  
Building 87 Room 135 @ 1300-1430

July 11  
July 18

Female Bystander Intervention  
Gardner Auditorium  
Building 87 Room 135 @ 1300-1430

July 25

- Victims of sexual assault would be entitled to military legal assistance from someone trained to handle this kind of case, with such assistance extended to dependents of service members. The victim could refuse to participate in an investigation of the assault.
- Communications between a sexual assault victim and unit sexual assault coordinators and advocates and employees of a Defense Department hotline for sexual assault victims would be privileged, and could not be used as evidence unless the victim waives confidentiality.
- Medical or investigative records related to the sexual assault of service members or their dependents would be required to be maintained for not less than 100 years, and victims would have permanent access to the records. This is aimed at ending the military's practice of discarding some records and evidence after one year if a criminal case is not pursued.
- Victims of sexual assault would be given expedited consideration for transfer to a new unit or duty station. Reassignment would not be guaranteed, but the legislation says it should be granted to the "maximum extent possible."

"If we provide the legal protection for victims and their advocates and if we guarantee support for the victims of sexual assault, we can take the fragile and reversible gains in the fight against military sexual trauma and turn them into sustainable and irreversible progress," said Collins, cosponsor of the Senate bill and a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

That committee will consider the sexual assault legislation in June.

Rep. Louise Slaughter, D-N.Y., said congressional action is overdue. "As many as 90 percent of sexual assaults go unreported, and our women and men in uniform deserve better," she said. "Women have told me they were forced to salute their assailant day after day with no recourse."

Anuradha Bhagwati, executive director of the Service Women's Action Network, said the changes proposed by Congress would be especially helpful in situations when victims are in the same unit as perpetrators.

Humanitarian transfers would mean "victims aren't forced to work alongside or even share living quarters with their rapist," she said.

"These are practical, common-sense policy proposals that would have an immediate impact on the well-being of survivors, as well as increase the morale, cohesion on overall readiness of the armed forces," said Bhagwati, a former Marine Corps Captain.

The SAPR Program is dedicated to ending Sexual Assault in our community. It is imperative to remember that we can't do it alone. It takes support from each of you. This month we wanted to send a BIG THANK YOU to the Company Grade Officer Club and Windy Trail Golf Club for rendering their expertise and support for helping the SAPR Program have yet another successful Golf Tournament! Proceeds from the Golf Tournament were donated to ACMI House. Thank you 2Lt Cory Wagner and CPT Bryan Hielscher for your presence in presenting ACMI House Director, Holly Grace Campbell with proceeds.

## Resources

SAPR Hotline 580 649-0656

Chaplain 580 481-7485

Mental Health 580 481-5376

ACMI House 580 482-3800

Security Forces 580 481-7444

OSI 580 481-7720

Command Post 580 481-6313

