



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

RESPONSE SYSTEMS TO ADULT SEXUAL ASSAULT CRIMES PANEL
875 N. RANDOLPH STREET
ARLINGTON, VA 22203-1995

September 23, 2013

Anu Bhagwati
Executive Director, Service Women's Action Network
220 East 23rd Street
Suite 509
New York, NY 10010

Dear Ms. Bhagwati:

As you are aware, the Response Systems to Adult Sexual Assault Crimes Panel is conducting an independent review and assessment of the systems used to investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate crimes involving adult sexual assault and related offenses under Article 120 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). I want to thank your organization for agreeing to send a representative to appear before the Panel at our meetings on November 7 & 8, 2013, and also thank you for the constructive dialog and exchange of ideas my staff has had with your policy director, Mr Greg Jacob, over the last several months.

An essential element of our review is considering a wide spectrum of viewpoints, particularly those from organizations with expertise in the areas of the investigation, prosecution, and adjudication of adult sexual assault crimes in the military, and the systems in place to protect and support victims. We have already provided the Panel with a large amount of information from your organization, to include: statements provided for hearings before Congress and the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, hearing transcripts and information obtained directly from your website. The Panel welcomes your input on any issues raised in our attached terms of reference, to include amplifying information on the materials from Service Women's Action Network already submitted to our members.

In anticipation of the meetings in November I am also attaching our membership list, and some additional background. In November the Panel plans to focus in detail on the adequacy of the systems in place to protect and support victims through all phases – from reporting through disposition. Your organization receives unvarnished opinions and feedback from numerous survivors of sexual assault who have been through the UCMJ process or are currently in the midst of an investigation or trial. This positions you to provide unique insight on how the process affects victims, and what areas need improvement.

By way of example only, we would like to hear your recommendations with respect to the role of the commander on preferment and disposition of sexual assault offenses under the UCMJ, change or reform to Article 32 hearings, the scope of representation for victims' counsel, how specifically collateral misconduct by victims should be addressed and adjudicated, what role victims should have in the post-trial review process and use of the good soldier defense. The panel would also benefit from your organization's assessment of how any recommended reforms should be implemented and what impacts there might be to other parts of the process.

Please be advised that the Panel is an advisory committee under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, so that all information and documents received are available to the public for copying or inspection.

I very much appreciate your organization's willingness to appear at our meeting, and I know that the Panel looks forward to your presentation. If you have any questions please contact Mr. David Gruber, who may be reached at [REDACTED] or by e-mail at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,



Barbara Jones
Chair
Response Systems Panel

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