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To: [Saunders, Terri A CIV OSD OGC \(US\)](#)
Subject: Response Systems To Adult Sexual Assault Crimes Panel
Date: Tuesday, February 04, 2014 11:24:43 PM

Congratulations to your panel and its members in carrying out the mandate established in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (Public Law 112-239). I have read your reports, watched videos of public testimony, and read the thoroughly researched and well documented and written "draft" publications of Colonel Professor Lisa M. Schenck. I believe you have gotten at the heart of the matter from a legal and statistical perspective (DoD, DoJ, etc.), but seem to be a little "light" on addressing the cultural and psychosocial aspects of this pervasive and ubiquitous problem.

I must confess that I have not read or heard everything that your panel has produced, so the questions and concerns I have may well have been addressed. However, I am concerned that we may be trying to "legislate" behavior and mores without addressing some of the unique characteristics of the military culture and environment. We have dedicated millions and perhaps billions of dollars in resources to help military members (and their families) to deal with the stresses and strains of fighting in two long wars, living with multiple deployments of varying duration while trying to develop or maintain healthy and meaningful relationships.

In the Air Force (and the other Services) we teach the enlisted and officers the meaning of duty, honor, integrity, and the pursuit of excellence. All of this is critical for creating and maintaining a disciplined, efficient, and ready fighting force. We have programs for suicide prevention, behavioral health screening, building resilience and coping skills, crisis intervention and short-term counseling, treatment of Acute Stress Disorder, PTSD, and Traumatic Brain Injuries. Do any of these programs help military personnel (men and women) learn how to treat each other with respect and how to establish healthy, personal boundaries that allow them to co-exist and work together in closed and often dangerous environments where privacy is often sacrificed for self-preservation.

How do you teach and promote unit cohesiveness while maintaining a line that is not to be crossed? This becomes difficult when a large percentage of your troops are immature, have not been taught to be insightful (especially having personal insight) or how to use good judgment in most circumstances, not just the life and death situations. There are so many factors that contribute to the "blurring" of "that line." In the cases of personal violence and sexual assault there is no question that the line has been crossed. But when the line is blurred or not well defined for one or both parties, then the real challenge for the "victim," the "accused," and the "authorities (e.g., Commanders)" begins. How do you seek true justice if you cannot be just and fair and an objective advocate for all parties involved and yet decisive in your actions?

Granted, much of this is philosophical or subjective, but is nonetheless a critical part of pursuing a true and lasting solution to a very real problem in both military and civilian worlds.

I do not approach this strictly from a theoretical perspective, but from firsthand knowledge and experience as a military (USAF) and civilian (VA, DoD: Military and Family Life Consultant) mental health care provider and manager. Thank you for considering my comments.

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