

The New York Times

June 20, 2013

Bills on Military Sex Abuse

To the Editor:

Re “Complex Fight in Senate Over Curbing Sexual Assaults in Military” (news article, June 15):

News reports have not recognized that Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand’s [bill](#) demonstrates deep understanding of the military justice system.

She made three thoughtful choices: not singling out sexual assault for special treatment but treating all felony offenses the same; leaving minor misconduct under command control but sending felony cases to military lawyers; and leaving full responsibility for “military” crimes (those without civilian counterpart) with commanders.

Everything about the proposal takes military needs into account, except for the fact that military leaders don’t like change.

Senator Carl Levin’s proposal will make the problem worse. It applies only to sexual assault crimes, and then only when prosecution is declined. Cue the screams from defense lawyers and service members that every prosecution is brought for political reasons.

DIANE H. MAZUR

Davis, Calif., June 15, 2013

The writer, a law professor at the University of Florida and a former Air Force officer, is the author of “A More Perfect Military: How the Constitution Can Make Our Military Stronger.”



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