

Military Sexual Assault Litigations

Protect Our Defenders is collaborating with attorney Susan Burke to bring lawsuits against the Department of Defense addressing the epidemic of unpunished sexual violence within the military. The Burke Law Firm is nationally recognized for its work on behalf of US armed forces members who have been raped or sexually assaulted.

We support the following suits because the US military has proven itself unwilling to make the reforms necessary to address the rape and sexual assault epidemic within its ranks. *In a democracy like ours, we affect change by holding institutions of power legally responsible for their transgressions. In the same way that the courts enforce the law to clean up abuses within religious and educational institutions, we're using the power of the judicial system to change the military's behavior.*

2012 Marine Lawsuit

This is the second lawsuit against the military focusing on how the Navy and Marines retaliate against service members who come forward to report being harassed, raped or sexually assaulted.

[Klay and Hellmer et. al. v. Panetta et al full complaint](#)

The suit cites “high tolerance for sexual predators in their ranks” and hostile environment that discourages victims of sexual assault from coming forward and punishes them when they do.

[View press conference announcement of lawsuit](#)

2012 Academies Lawsuit

Lawsuit Against US Military For Failure to Protect Cadets at Service Academies from Rape or Sexual Assault

[Marquet and Kendzior v. Gates et al](#)

Protect Our Defenders is collaborating with Susan Burke and her firm to advance this lawsuit that accuses two US military service academies, West Point and the Naval Academy, of systemically and repeatedly ignoring sexual harassment and rape, and failing to prosecute cadets and midshipmen who raped their fellow students.

2012 Class Action Lawsuit Appeal Cioca v. Rumsfeld

[Appeal in Kori Cioca et al v. Donald Rumsfeld et al](#)

The appeal, filed in the 4th circuit, argues that the Constitution vests control over the military in civilian hands, Protect Our Defenders is collaborating with attorney Susan Burke to bring lawsuits against the Department of Defense addressing the epidemic of unpunished sexual violence within the military.