

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 189 Session of 2023

INTRODUCED BY CEPEDA-FREYTIZ, SANCHEZ, KINSEY, KHAN, McNEILL, T. DAVIS, DONAHUE, SCHLOSSBERG, HILL-EVANS, HOWARD, SCOTT, MADDEN, KAZEEM, CERRATO, SHUSTERMAN, GILLEN, CONKLIN, GREEN AND GUENST, AUGUST 29, 2023

AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AS AMENDED, OCTOBER 2, 2023

A RESOLUTION

1 Designating the week of October 15 through 21, 2023, as
2 "Military Sexual Trauma Survivor Week" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, The United States Department of Defense's 2021
4 Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military revealed in
5 stark detail that sexual assault and sexual harassment remain
6 persistent and distressing problems in our military; and

7 WHEREAS, Service member sexual assault reports increased by
8 13% in 2021 compared to the 2020 report; and

9 WHEREAS, Shame and stigma create a barrier to reporting
10 sexual assault; and

11 WHEREAS, On average, only one out of every three sexual
12 assault survivors come forward to report the assault; and

13 WHEREAS, Even though women make up only 20% of the United
14 States Armed Forces members, they are the targets of 63% of
15 sexual assaults; and

16 WHEREAS, Sexual assault in the military is not only a woman's

1 issue; and

2 WHEREAS, More than 100,000 men have been sexually assaulted
3 in the military in recent decades; and

4 WHEREAS, In today's military, ~~rape culture is an epidemic and~~ <--
5 ~~military sexual assault survivors are often forgotten; and~~

6 SEXUAL ASSAULT AND MISCONDUCT PERSIST DESPITE ONGOING EFFORTS <--
7 WITHIN THE MILITARY TO STOP SEXUAL ASSAULTS, PUNISH PERPETRATORS
8 AND CARE FOR SURVIVORS; AND

9 WHEREAS, Prior to being assaulted, many military sexual
10 assault survivors had dreams of serving for 20 or more years in
11 the United States Armed Forces and were happy in their
12 workplace; and

13 WHEREAS, While some military sexual assault survivors may
14 choose to stay in the military, the psychological impact of the
15 assault and resulting trauma can push survivors out of the
16 service and lead to tremendous difficulty readjusting to their
17 civilian lives; and

18 WHEREAS, Survivors of military sexual assault often decide
19 not to report the assault for the reasons of embarrassment, fear
20 and shame and professional and personal implications; and

21 WHEREAS, The military's culture of duty, teamwork, strength
22 and accomplishment conflicts with military sexual assault
23 survivors' needs, resulting in them being stigmatized as weak or
24 failing their fellow service members; and

25 WHEREAS, The uniqueness of military life causes additional
26 anxiety to a sexual assault survivor and complicates the
27 survivor's life, which may result in lack of promotion or
28 removal from service; and

29 WHEREAS, The personal stories of survivors underscore the
30 need for meaningful change to provide healing to those affected

1 by military sexual assault trauma through adequate medical and
2 mental health services; and

3 WHEREAS, To highlight the epidemic of sexual assault in the
4 United States Armed Forces, policymakers should initiate an
5 examination of military culture and military justice at the
6 Statewide level; and

7 WHEREAS, In this Commonwealth, the Department of Military and
8 Veterans Affairs, local veterans' centers and United States
9 Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers are able to offer
10 resources for military sexual assault survivors; and

11 WHEREAS, The House of Representatives must honor the
12 strength, resolve and perseverance of military sexual assault
13 survivors and work urgently to end sexual violence in the
14 military throughout this Commonwealth; therefore be it

15 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate the
16 week of October 15 through 21, 2023, as "Military Sexual Trauma
17 Survivor Week" in Pennsylvania.