

113TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. 1917

AN ACT

To provide for additional enhancements of the sexual assault prevention and response activities of the Armed Forces.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Victims Protection Act
3 of 2014”.

4 **SEC. 2. INCLUSION OF SENIOR TRIAL COUNSEL DETER-**
5 **MINATIONS ON REFERRAL OF CASES TO**
6 **TRIAL BY COURT-MARTIAL IN CASES RE-**
7 **VIEWED BY SECRETARIES OF MILITARY DE-**
8 **PARTMENTS.**

9 Section 1744 of the National Defense Authorization
10 Act for Fiscal Year 2014 is amended—

11 (1) in subsection (c)—

12 (A) in the subsection heading, by inserting
13 “OR SENIOR TRIAL COUNSEL” after “STAFF
14 JUDGE ADVOCATE”; and

15 (B) by inserting “or the senior trial coun-
16 sel detailed to the case” after “Military Jus-
17 tice),”; and

18 (2) in subsection (d)—

19 (A) in the subsection heading, by inserting
20 “OR SENIOR TRIAL COUNSEL” after “STAFF
21 JUDGE ADVOCATE”; and

22 (B) by inserting “or the senior trial coun-
23 sel detailed to the case” after “Military Jus-
24 tice),”.

1 **SEC. 3. ADDITIONAL ENHANCEMENTS OF MILITARY DE-**
2 **PARTMENT ACTIONS ON SEXUAL ASSAULT**
3 **PREVENTION AND RESPONSE.**

4 (a) **ADDITIONAL DUTY OF SPECIAL VICTIMS' COUN-**
5 **SEL.**—In addition to any duties authorized by section
6 1044e of title 10, United States Code (as added by section
7 1716 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal
8 Year 2014), a Special Victims' Counsel designated under
9 subsection (a) of such section 1044e shall provide advice
10 to victims of sexual assault on the advantages and dis-
11 advantages of prosecution of the offense concerned by
12 court-martial or by a civilian court with jurisdiction over
13 the offense before such victims express their preference
14 as to the prosecution of the offense under subsection (b).

15 (b) **CONSULTATION WITH VICTIMS REGARDING**
16 **PREFERENCE IN PROSECUTION OF CERTAIN SEXUAL OF-**
17 **FENSES.**—

18 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretaries of the mili-
19 tary departments shall each establish a process to
20 ensure consultation with the victim of a covered sex-
21 ual offense that occurs in the United States with re-
22 spect to the victim's preference as to whether the of-
23 fense should be prosecuted by court-martial or by a
24 civilian court with jurisdiction over the offense.

25 (2) **WEIGHT AFFORDED PREFERENCE.**—The
26 preference expressed by a victim under paragraph

1 (1) with respect to the prosecution of an offense,
2 while not binding, should be afforded great weight in
3 the determination whether to prosecute the offense
4 by court-martial or by a civilian court.

5 (3) NOTICE TO VICTIM OF LACK OF CIVILIAN
6 CRIMINAL PROSECUTION AFTER PREFERENCE FOR
7 SUCH PROSECUTION.—In the event a victim ex-
8 presses a preference under paragraph (1) in favor of
9 prosecution of an offence by civilian court and the
10 civilian authorities determine to decline prosecution,
11 or defer to prosecution by court-martial, the victim
12 shall be promptly notified of that determination.

13 (c) PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS OF MEMBERS OF
14 THE ARMED FORCES.—

15 (1) APPRAISALS OF ALL MEMBERS ON COMPLI-
16 ANCE WITH SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RE-
17 SPONSE PROGRAMS.—The Secretaries of the military
18 departments shall each ensure that the written per-
19 formance appraisals of members of the Armed
20 Forces (whether officers or enlisted members) under
21 the jurisdiction of such Secretary include an assess-
22 ment of the extent to which each such member sup-
23 ports the sexual assault prevention and response
24 program of the Armed Force concerned.

1 (2) PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS OF COM-
2 MANDING OFFICERS.—The Secretaries of the mili-
3 tary departments shall each ensure that the per-
4 formance appraisals of commanding officers under
5 the jurisdiction of such Secretary indicate the extent
6 to which each such commanding officer has or has
7 not established a command climate in which—

8 (A) allegations of sexual assault are prop-
9 erly managed and fairly evaluated; and

10 (B) a victim can report criminal activity,
11 including sexual assault, without fear of retali-
12 ation, including ostracism and group pressure
13 from other members of the command.

14 (d) COMMAND CLIMATE ASSESSMENTS FOLLOWING
15 INCIDENTS OF CERTAIN SEXUAL OFFENSES.—

16 (1) ASSESSMENTS REQUIRED.—The Secretaries
17 of the military departments shall each establish a
18 process whereby a command climate assessment is
19 performed following an incident involving a covered
20 sexual offense for each of the command of the ac-
21 cused and the command of the victim. If the accused
22 and the victim are within the same command, only
23 a single climate assessment is required. The process
24 shall ensure the timely completion of command cli-
25 mate assessments for provision to military criminal

1 investigation organizations and commanders pursu-
2 ant to paragraph (2).

3 (2) PROVISION TO MILITARY CRIMINAL INVES-
4 TIGATION ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMANDERS.—A
5 command climate assessment performed pursuant to
6 paragraph (1) shall be provided to the following:

7 (A) The military criminal investigation or-
8 ganization conducting the investigation of the
9 offense concerned.

10 (B) The commander next higher in the
11 chain of command of the command covered by
12 the climate assessment.

13 (e) CONFIDENTIAL REVIEW OF CHARACTERIZATION
14 OF TERMS OF DISCHARGE OF VICTIMS OF SEXUAL OF-
15 FENSES.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretaries of the mili-
17 tary departments shall each establish a confidential
18 process, through boards for the correction of mili-
19 tary records of the military department concerned,
20 by which an individual who was the victim of a cov-
21 ered sexual offense during service in the Armed
22 Forces may challenge, on the basis of being the vic-
23 tim of such an offense, the terms or characterization
24 of the individual's discharge or separation from the
25 Armed Forces.

1 (2) CONSIDERATION OF INDIVIDUAL EXPERI-
2 ENCES IN CONNECTION WITH OFFENSES.—In decid-
3 ing whether to modify the terms or characterization
4 of an individual’s discharge or separation pursuant
5 to the process required by paragraph (1), the Sec-
6 retary of the military department concerned shall in-
7 struct boards to give due consideration to the psy-
8 chological and physical aspects of the individual’s ex-
9 perience in connection with the offense concerned,
10 and to what bearing such experience may have had
11 on the circumstances surrounding the individual’s
12 discharge or separation from the Armed Forces.

13 (3) PRESERVATION OF CONFIDENTIALITY.—
14 Documents considered and decisions rendered pursu-
15 ant to the process required by paragraph (1) shall
16 not be made available to the public, except with the
17 consent of the individual concerned.

18 (f) COVERED SEXUAL OFFENSE DEFINED.—In sub-
19 sections (a) through (e), the term “covered sexual offense”
20 means any of the following:

21 (1) Rape or sexual assault under subsection (a)
22 or (b) of section 920 of title 10, United States Code
23 (article 120 of the Uniform Code of Military Jus-
24 tice).

1 (2) Forcible sodomy under section 925 of title
2 10, United States Code (article 125 of the Uniform
3 Code of Military Justice).

4 (3) An attempt to commit an offense specified
5 in paragraph (1) or (2) as punishable under section
6 880 of title 10, United States Code (article 80 of the
7 Uniform Code of Military Justice).

8 (g) MODIFICATION OF MILITARY RULES OF EVI-
9 DENCE RELATING TO ADMISSIBILITY OF GENERAL MILI-
10 TARY CHARACTER TOWARD PROBABILITY OF INNO-
11 CENCE.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the
12 enactment of this Act, Rule 404(a) of the Military Rules
13 of Evidence shall be modified to clarify that the general
14 military character of an accused is not admissible for the
15 purpose of showing the probability of innocence of the ac-
16 cused, except that evidence of a trait of the military char-
17 acter of an accused may be offered in evidence by the ac-
18 cused when that trait is relevant to an element of an of-
19 fense for which the accused has been charged.

20 **SEC. 4. APPLICABILITY OF SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION**
21 **AND RESPONSE AND RELATED MILITARY**
22 **JUSTICE ENHANCEMENTS TO MILITARY**
23 **SERVICE ACADEMIES.**

24 (a) MILITARY SERVICE ACADEMIES.—The Secretary
25 of the military department concerned shall ensure that the

1 provisions of title XVII of the National Defense Author-
2 ization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 (as amended by this Act)
3 and this Act apply to the United States Military Academy,
4 the Naval Academy, and the Air Force Academy, as appli-
5 cable.

6 (b) COAST GUARD ACADEMY.—The Secretary of
7 Homeland Security shall ensure that the provisions of title
8 XVII of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal
9 Year 2014 (as so amended) and this Act apply to the
10 Coast Guard Academy.

11 **SEC. 5. COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF**
12 **DEFENSE AND THE DEPARTMENT OF JUS-**
13 **TICE IN EFFORTS TO PREVENT AND RE-**
14 **SPOND TO SEXUAL ASSAULT.**

15 (a) STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK ON COLLABORATION
16 REQUIRED.—Not later than 270 days after the date of
17 the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense and
18 the Attorney General shall jointly develop a strategic
19 framework for ongoing collaboration between the Depart-
20 ment of Defense and the Department of Justice in their
21 efforts to prevent and respond to sexual assault. The
22 framework shall be based on and include the following:

23 (1) An assessment of the role of the Depart-
24 ment of Justice in investigations and prosecutions of
25 sexual assault cases in which the Department of De-

1 fense and the Department of Justice have concur-
2 rent jurisdiction, with the assessment to include a
3 review of and list of recommended revisions to rel-
4 evant Memoranda of Understanding and related doc-
5 uments between the Department of Justice and the
6 Department of Defense.

7 (2) An assessment of the feasibility of estab-
8 lishing the position of advisor on military sexual as-
9 saults within the Department of Justice (using exist-
10 ing Department resources and personnel) to assist in
11 the activities required under paragraph (1) and pro-
12 vide to the Department of Defense investigative and
13 other assistance in sexual assault cases occurring on
14 domestic and overseas military installations over
15 which the Department of Defense has primary juris-
16 diction, with the assessment to address the feasi-
17 bility of maintaining representatives or designees of
18 the advisor at military installations for the purpose
19 of reviewing cases of sexual assault and providing
20 assistance with the investigation and prosecution of
21 sexual assaults.

22 (3) An assessment of the number of unsolved
23 sexual assault cases that have occurred on military
24 installations, and a plan, with appropriate bench-
25 marks, to review those cases using currently avail-

1 able civilian and military law enforcement resources,
2 such as new technology and forensics information.

3 (4) A strategy to leverage efforts by the De-
4 partment of Defense and the Department of Jus-
5 tice—

6 (A) to improve the quality of investiga-
7 tions, prosecutions, specialized training, services
8 to victims, awareness, and prevention regarding
9 sexual assault; and

10 (B) to address social conditions that relate
11 to sexual assault.

12 (5) Mechanisms to promote information sharing
13 and best practices between the Department of De-
14 fense and the Department of Justice on prevention
15 and response to sexual assault, including victim as-
16 sistance through the Violence against Women Act
17 and Office for Victims of Crime programs of the De-
18 partment of Justice.

19 (b) REPORT.—The Secretary of Defense and the At-
20 torney General shall jointly submit to the appropriate
21 committees of Congress a report on the framework re-
22 quired by subsection (a). The report shall—

23 (1) describe the manner in which the Depart-
24 ment of Defense and Department of Justice will col-
25 laborate on an ongoing basis under the framework;

1 (2) explain obstacles to implementing the
2 framework; and

3 (3) identify changes in laws necessary to
4 achieve the purpose of this section.

5 (c) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DE-
6 FINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate commit-
7 tees of Congress” means—

8 (1) the Committee on Armed Services and the
9 Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate; and

10 (2) the Committee on Armed Services and the
11 Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Rep-
12 resentatives.

13 **SEC. 6. MODIFICATION OF DEADLINE FOR REPORT ON**
14 **NEED FOR PUNITIVE UCMJ ARTICLE ON IN-**
15 **APPROPRIATE CONTACT WITH PROSPECTIVE**
16 **AND NEW MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.**

17 Section 1741(d) of the National Defense Authoriza-
18 tion Act for Fiscal Year 2014 is amended by striking “120
19 days” and inserting “60 days”.

20 **SEC. 7. SENSE OF SENATE ON INDEPENDENT PANEL ON RE-**
21 **VIEW AND ASSESSMENT ON RESPONSE SYS-**
22 **TEMS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT CRIMES.**

23 It is the sense of the Senate that—

24 (1) the panel to review and assess the systems
25 used to respond to sexual assault established by sec-

1 tion 576 of the National Defense Authorization Act
2 for Fiscal Year 2013 (Public Law 112–239; 126
3 Stat. 1758) is conducting an independent assess-
4 ment of the systems used to investigate, prosecute,
5 and adjudicate crimes involving adult sexual assault
6 and related offenses;

7 (2) the work of the panel will be critical in in-
8 forming the efforts of Congress to combat rape, sex-
9 ual assault, and other sex-related crimes in the
10 Armed Forces;

11 (3) the panel should include in its assessment
12 under subsection (d)(1) of section 576 of the Na-
13 tional Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year
14 2013 a review of the reforms that will be enacted
15 pursuant to title XVII of the National Defense Au-
16 thorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 (as amended by
17 this Act) and this Act; and

18 (4) the views of the victim advocate community
19 should continue to be well-represented on the panel,

- 1 and input from victims should continue to play a
- 2 central role in informing the work of the panel.

Passed the Senate March 10, 2014.

Attest:

Secretary.

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To provide for additional enhancements of the sexual assault prevention and response activities of the Armed Forces.