

## DEOMI News Highlights

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DEOMI News Highlights is a weekly compilation of published items and commentary with a focus on equal opportunity, equal employment opportunity, diversity, culture, and human relations issues. DEOMI News Highlights is also a management tool intended to serve the informational needs of equity professionals and senior DOD officials in the continuing assessment of defense policies, programs, and actions. Further reproduction or redistribution for private use or gain is subject to original copyright restrictions.

### **International Women's Day 2019 theme is #BalanceforBetter: Here's what you need to know [Marina Pitofsky, *USA TODAY*, 7 March 2019]**

- #BalanceforBetter is the theme for this year's International Women's Day, which is observed each year on March 8. The 2019 initiative is aimed at gender equality, a greater awareness of discrimination, and a celebration of women's achievements, according to the International Women's Day [website](#). That includes reducing the global pay gap between men and women and making sure all are equal—and balanced—in activist movements, boardrooms, and beyond.
- International Women's Day was first observed in 1909 when an estimated 15,000 women marched in New York City demanding fair wages, labor standards, and guaranteed voting rights, according to the International Women's Day website.
- In 1975, the United Nations officially declared the year International Women's Year and made March 8 International Women's Day annually.

[International Women's Day 2019 theme is #BalanceforBetter: Here's what you need to know](#)

### **Michigan National Guard Gets First Female Infantry Company Commander [Matthew Cox, *Military.com*, 7 March 2019]**

- U.S. Army Capt. Amie Kempainen made history recently by becoming the first female officer to take command of an infantry company in the Michigan Army National Guard, and among the first female infantry company commanders in the entire Army.
- Kempainen, who took command of B Company, 3rd Battalion, 126th Infantry Regiment, in a March 2 ceremony, is a member of a growing sisterhood that has stepped forward to volunteer for infantry, armor, and other direct-action jobs after the Pentagon opened up all combat-arms jobs to women just over three years ago.
- The Army has gone through a cultural shift since then-Defense Secretary Ash Carter reversed the regulation banning women from serving in direct-action combat-arms jobs in late December 2015. Carter's decision came just a few months after then-Capt. Kristen Griest and 1st Lt. Shaye Haver became [the first women](#) to successfully complete U.S. Army Ranger School.

[Michigan National Guard Gets First Female Infantry Company Commander](#)

### **The new plan to prevent veteran suicides: new grants, better research, more community focus [Leo Shane III, *Military Times*, 5 March 2019]**

- The White House is creating a new high-level task force on [preventing veteran suicide](#) which will include new community outreach grants aimed at former service members and expanded projects across a host of government agencies to coordinate research and prevention efforts.
- It's the latest in a series of steps by [President Donald Trump's] administration to address the problem, which claims [an estimated 20 veteran lives every day](#). Last year, the president signed a separate executive order providing more counseling and [mental health care](#) for recently separated service members, who face a significantly higher risk of suicide than other military groups.
- Veterans Affairs officials estimate that of the 20 veterans a day who take their own lives, about 70 percent have little or no contact with the federal veteran system. That makes targeted community outreach to populations outside those systems critical to addressing the [suicide problem](#).

[The new plan to prevent veteran suicides: new grants, better research, more community focus](#)

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# Culture

# ‘Captain Marvel’ pays tribute to Air Force history — and a fallen Thunderbird

By Stephen Losey

Air Force Times, March 5, 2019



*Brie Larson, left, spent as much time as possible with Brig. Gen. Jeannie Leavitt, former 57th Wing commander, during a January 2018 trip to Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, to research her character for the new “Captain Marvel” movie. (Brad Baruh/Marvel Studios)*

“[Captain Marvel](#),” the latest in Marvel’s series of blockbuster superhero films, is packed with hat tips and tributes to aviation history, culture and, in particular, a [fallen Thunderbird](#) whose death

last year shook the Air Force.

The final version of the movie, which tells the story of superpowered [F-15 pilot Carol Danvers](#), aka Captain Marvel, ends up giving the Air Force less actual screen time than the behind-the-scenes features and trailers suggest. Much of the film instead deals with the war between two alien races — the warrior Kree and the shape-shifting, lizard-like Skrulls — and what happens when that conflict spills onto an unsuspecting, mid-1990s Planet Earth, with Capt. Danvers caught in the middle.

But Danvers’ Air Force service sets the tone for the film and was the “grounding element” that drew directors Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck to her character, they said in a Feb. 22 interview with Air Force Times.

Comics writer Kelly Sue DeConnick, who came from an Air Force family and created this incarnation of Carol Danvers as Captain Marvel in 2012, “always described her as having a Chuck Yeager swagger,” Fleck said. “The Right Stuff” was a big influence on this movie as well.”

Boden, Fleck and the movie’s star, Oscar winner Brie Larson, famously traveled to Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada in January 2018, where they spent days talking to pilots, maintainers and other airmen, and even flew in fighter jets.

Brig. Gen. Jeannie Leavitt, the first female fighter pilot in the Air Force, who at the time was commander of Nellis’ 57th Wing, also met with Larson and the directors.

In a Feb. 11 interview, Leavitt said Larson was focused on getting her portrayal of a female fighter pilot right. Larson asked Leavitt about details as minute as how a fighter pilot would salute, interact with her crew chief, climb the ladder into the cockpit, carry her helmet bag and put on her flight gear.

Leavitt also told her about her flying experiences at events such as Red Flag and weapons school. The demanding pace of being a fighter pilot requires one to be very driven, she told Larson, and also described what it was like to be a woman, a wife and mother in the heavily male fighter pilot culture.

“I was very impressed with how interested she was in getting the character correct,” Leavitt said of Larson. “With it being Hollywood, it doesn’t have to be accurate, and yet it was very important to her that she was accurate in her portrayal of a female fighter pilot. She spent a lot of time and asked a lot of questions to ensure she understood it. So I thought that spoke volumes about her as an actress.”

Boden said the stories Leavitt shared helped a great deal to shape the main character’s journey.

<https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2019/03/05/captain-marvel-pays-tribute-to-air-force-history-and-a-fallen-thunderbird/>

In a behind-the-scenes video released in January, Larson said her time at Nellis helped her understand where Danvers was coming from.

“The thing I found so unique about this character was that sense of humor, mixed with total capability in whatever challenge comes her way, which, I realized after going to the Air Force base, is really what Air Force pilots are like.” Larson said in the video, which also showed her flying in an F-16 at Nellis.

That comes through in Larson’s performance as Danvers, who brims with the familiar fighter pilot confidence that comes from handling millions of dollars of technology at Mach speed. At the same time, Danvers’ struggle to understand where she fits in as part of this intergalactic war, and how to control her powers, makes for an engaging character arc.

The film doesn’t shy away from the challenges female pilots such as Danvers would have encountered about three decades ago — not only in the form of boorish comments, but also in the institutional restrictions on the missions they could fly.

All of that adds up to an engaging and sympathetic character, so when Danvers unleashes her Captain Marvel powers to their fullest extent, the film crackles with energy and delivers exactly the kind of rousing sequences for which the best superhero flicks are known.

One airman whom the film crew met at Nellis was Thunderbirds pilot Maj. Stephen “Cajun” Del Bagno, the team’s skilled slot pilot who flew its No. 4 jet. Del Bagno and another Thunderbird later visited the movie’s set to consult.

But tragedy struck last April, a week after he consulted on the movie, when Del Bagno died in a crash while training.

The film crew grieved his loss, even though they had only known him for a few weeks. Boden said that Del Bagno gave her the call sign “Diplow,” and was an “energetic spirit [who] made us immediately feel at home and part of his world.”

Del Bagno “embraced us, wanted so much to teach us about the culture of the Air Force, loved that culture so much, taught us to appreciate it in a way that we wouldn’t have otherwise,” Boden said. “I just can’t explain how meaningful it was. He touched a lot of people on our set in the short time that he got to spend with us ... and it was a very, very, very sad day when we found out and had to let everybody know.”

Larson also posted a tribute to Del Bagno on social media after he died, which she signed “Sparrow, forever,” her apparent call sign.

The film contains multiple tributes to Del Bagno. Not only is it dedicated to his memory, he even has a brief cameo. Del Bagno appears in a brief flashback scene playing Crud — a fast-paced, alcohol-soaked variant of billiards popular with fighter pilots — alongside Carol Danvers and her wingman, Maria Rambeau, at the squadron’s watering hole.

What’s more, Boden said the filmmakers snuck the word “Cajun” into the background of several scenes.

Fleck added that the filmmakers included a hidden Easter egg — a burning piano. The old fighter pilot tradition began, according to one version of the legend, in the UK’s Royal Air Force during World War II as a tribute to a fallen pilot. Supposedly, the first piano was burned when an RAF pilot, who was a gifted piano player and a beloved member of his squadron, was shot down and killed. Because he would never make music again, the story goes, that legendary pilot’s comrades burned his piano in his memory.

<https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2019/03/05/captain-marvel-pays-tribute-to-air-force-history-and-a-fallen-thunderbird/>

Several more aviation references can be found in “Captain Marvel” — the most obvious of which is the name of a scene-stealing cat, “Goose,” who hitches a ride with Danvers (and leaves Samuel L. Jackson’s character, SHIELD Agent Nick Fury, hilariously flabbergasted several times).

Even Danvers’ fighter pilot bar — Pancho’s Bar — is a clever reference to The Right Stuff lore. Boden confirmed that was named after Florence “Pancho” Barnes, a pioneering early aviator and stunt pilot who, among other accomplishments, founded the Women’s Air Reserve to ensure female pilots had a place in military aviation. She also, in 1930, broke the women’s speed record that had been held by Amelia Earhart.

Later, Barnes ran a ranch and dance hall at Edwards Air Force Base in California called the Happy Bottom Riding Club, which became enormously popular with pilots there. She gave free steak dinners there to Yeager and other pilots the first time they broke the sound barrier. Barnes and her club are memorably featured in the book and film “The Right Stuff.”

The original version of “Captain Marvel” envisioned by the directors would have included longer stretches with Carol Danvers during her Air Force days, Boden said. However, as the film continued to develop, the directors pared away the story until most of it focused on the sci-fi, superhero elements.

But it is still unmistakably an Air Force film. Scenes of Danvers in a hanger and on a flightline were filmed at Edwards Air Force Base, Disney said. The F-15Cs in those scenes were flown in from the California Air National Guard’s 144th Fighter Wing, which is based in Fresno. And a flashback to Danvers’ days on the Air Force Academy obstacle course, filmed at a park in Culver City, California, looks close enough to pass for the woods of Jacks Valley in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Leavitt said she hopes young people — especially young women — who go to see “Captain Marvel” come away with an interest in the Air Force and what it has to offer.

“She represents a role that so many young ladies could strive to do, in terms of becoming an officer, becoming an airman, [and] joining our Air Force,” Leavitt said. “So often, a lot of American society is not familiar with the Air Force. And so this, hopefully, will inspire people to learn more about the Air Force.”

As for supervillains across the galaxy? They’re about to learn that an airman is the last person you want to cross.

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**SEE ALSO:**

[‘Captain Marvel’ Takes Flight — Through Very Familiar Skies](#) [NPR, 2019-03-05]

# **Discrimination**

# Congress Moves to Ban Discriminatory Advertising on Social Media

*Lawmakers also introduced bills to help both vets and the larger U.S. workforce navigate an increasingly tech-centric job market.*

By Jack Corrigan

Government Executive, March 4, 2019



(PIXIEME/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM)

Capitol Hill's latest privacy bill takes aim at social media platforms that host discriminatory targeted ads.

The [DATA Privacy Act](#), introduced by Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto, D-Nev., explicitly bars Facebook, Twitter and other companies from allowing advertisers to use consumer data to

discriminate by race, gender or sexual orientation. Under the legislation, the Federal Trade Commission would issue clear guidance on what constitutes online discrimination and gain new powers to penalize organizations that violate the rules.

The bill also includes a number of provisions requiring companies to be more transparent about their data collection practices and take steps to adequately protect consumer data.

In 2016, a *ProPublica* investigation revealed Facebook permitted companies to block users from viewing ads and other posts based on race, which stood in possible violation of federal housing discrimination laws.

## *No Cheaters Allowed*

Sens. Mark Warner, D-Va., and Marco Rubio, R-Fla., worry the Chinese might be stacking the decks against American companies when setting global standards for 5G.

On Friday, the pair pressed National Intelligence Director Dan Coats to issue an unclassified report on China's influence over international groups responsible for setting principles for 5G networks. The report should detail any attempts by China to sway standards organizations in a way favorable to its domestic companies and discuss the potential impacts if the boards become politicized.

"We believe Chinese influence in our [international standard-setting bodies] is not fully appreciated, and the [intelligence community] can play an essential role in filling the publicly available information gap—a necessary first step to countering this trend," they wrote in a letter to Coats. "We hope that this report will be part of an ongoing effort to share more timely and relevant information with U.S. companies and our allies."

## *Get Out the Huawei*

Intelligence leaders on Capitol Hill are pushing the government to secure the nation's energy infrastructure against threats posed by Huawei products.

Lawmakers last week urged the Energy and Homeland Security departments to ban the U.S. energy industry from using any equipment built by the Chinese company. The Senate recently introduced [legislation](#) that would bar Huawei products from the nation's telecommunications infrastructure.

"We urge you to work with all federal, state and local regulators, as well as the hundreds of independent power producers and electricity distributors nation-wide to ensure our systems are protected," the



<https://www.nextgov.com/cio-briefing/2019/03/congress-moves-ban-discriminatory-advertising-social-media/155260/>

lawmakers wrote [in a letter](#) to Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen and Energy Secretary Rick Perry. “We stand ready and willing to provide any assistance you need to secure our critical electricity infrastructure.”

### ***Do It For the Kids***

A bipartisan group of senators on Tuesday reintroduced a bill that would fund research into the effects of technology on American kids.

The [Children and Media Research Advancement Act](#) would allocate \$95 million to the National Institutes of Health over the next five years to see how smartphones, computers, social media, video games and other digital products affect bullying, depression and addiction in kids.

Amazon, Google, Apple and Facebook have [reportedly](#) come out in support of the bill.

### ***It's the Ethical Thing to Do***

House lawmakers want Congress to set basic standards for the ethical development of artificial intelligence.

A group of nine lawmakers on Tuesday introduced a [resolution](#) calling on federal leaders to collaborate with industry, academia and civic groups to create guidelines for building trustworthy and robust artificial intelligence. The legislation promotes transparency, privacy protections and explainability in AI, and encourages efforts to build a diverse tech workforce.

“AI is the next phase of the digital revolution,” said Rep. Ro Khanna, D-Calif., said in a statement. “The burden falls on Congress to ensure that technology is implemented with thoughtful guidance given the shifting scope of privacy protections in the digital economy.”

### ***The Future is Now***

Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., also reintroduced a quartet of bills aimed at supporting U.S. workforce through tech-driven job market changes.

“Changes in the nature of work mean that Americans are more likely to change jobs and be engaged in non-traditional forms of work than they were a generation ago—but our federal policies haven’t kept up with those economic shifts,” Warner said in a statement.

One [bill](#) would create a tax credit for companies that invested in reskilling low- and middle-income workers, and [another](#) would give those workers better access to outside job training programs. The other two bills would support gig economy workers by [funding](#) state-sponsored benefits programs and helping people with “non-traditional forms of income” [receive mortgages](#).

### ***Calling All Vets***

The House unanimously passed a bill that would push veterans to pursue educational opportunities in STEM fields.

The [Supporting Veterans in STEM Careers Act](#) would call on the National Science Foundation to build a strategy for bringing more vets into STEM education and research programs. Sponsored by Reps. Conor Lamb, D-Penn., and Neal Dunn, R-Fla., the legislation would also require the White House to stand up a working group to identify obstacles for vets pursuing tech and science careers.

“[Veterans] shouldn't be struggling to find jobs in the civilian workforce, especially not when trade schools and businesses are struggling to fill high-demand, high-paying jobs in STEM-related industries,” Lamb said in a statement.

<https://www.nextgov.com/cio-briefing/2019/03/congress-moves-ban-discriminatory-advertising-social-media/155260/>

### ***Coming Up***

At 10 a.m. on Wednesday, the House Appropriations Committee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs subpanel will [examine](#) the massive electronic health record overhaul at the Veterans Affairs Department.

At 10:30 a.m., the House Energy and Commerce Consumer Protection subcommittee will [discuss](#) the benefits of diversity in the tech industry.

At 2 p.m., the House Science Committee will [explore](#) strategies for maintaining U.S. leadership in science and technology.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2019/03/04/google-asked-about-pay-equity-learned-it-was-mostly-underpaying-men/>

# Google reviewed pay equity and learned it was underpaying men

By Hamza Shaban

The Washington Post, March 4, 2019



*The Google logo is seen on its office building in St Pancras in London, Britain, June 27, 2017. (Facundo Arrizabalaga/EPA)*

When Google reviewed its own pay structure recently, it yielded an unexpected result: It was underpaying more men than women for doing similar work, the company revealed in a [blog post](#) published Monday.

The annual analysis comes as Google faces a [class-action lawsuit](#) that alleges it denied career opportunities to women and systematically paid them less than men performing similar work. The tech industry as a whole also is grappling with enduring criticism about a [lack of diversity](#) and [dysfunctional work environments](#).

Google declined to comment beyond the blog post.

Google said it analyzes pay across most of its job groups to ensure it compensates employees fairly, based on their work. If the company finds statistically significant discrepancies within an employment category, it said it raises pay within the group to eliminate gaps.

The review considers such factors as the market rates for a position, an employee's location and his or her performance rating. But managers also have the prerogative to boost pay using dedicated funds for such adjustments, the company said.

In its 2018 study, Google found that managers had dipped into the discretionary funds more often for women engineers, creating a pay gap for men in the same job category. This job class of lower-level software engineers is one of the larger groups at Google, the company said.

In addition, Google said it found disparities in its job offers. In both cases, Google's analysis led to pay adjustments to eliminate the discrepancies. In total, Google made \$9.7 million in pay adjustments to 10,677 employees. Google did not disclose how many male employees received raises as a result of the analysis.

Google's workforce is 69 percent male, according to its 2018 diversity report. Its parent company, Alphabet, counted 98,771 employees at the end of 2018. Though Alphabet does not disclose how many people work at Google, the vast majority of Alphabet's staff works for the search giant.

Google acknowledged that its annual study does not offer a complete picture of how women and underrepresented minorities are compensated within the company. "Our pay equity analysis ensures that compensation is fair for employees in the same job, at the same level, location and performance. But we know that's only part of the story," Google's lead analyst for pay equity, people analytics, Lauren Barbato, said in the [blog post](#).

Barbato said Google will conduct a comprehensive review of its compensation process, examining factors beyond comparing the pay of people at the same level. Google will also consider raises from promotions and how it assigns a new employee's level of seniority within a position, a process known as leveling.

# Diversity

## 2 female NASA astronauts and a Canadian flight controller will conduct the first-ever all-woman space walk

By Antonia Jaramillo, Florida Today

USA TODAY, March 6, 2019



NASA astronaut Anne McClain. (Photo: AFP/Getty Images)

On July 25, 1984, cosmonaut Svetlana Savitskaya became the first woman to walk in space. Now, almost 35 years later, history will once again be made as the first all-female spacewalk is scheduled to take place March 29.

[NASA](#) astronauts Anne McClain and Christina Koch will conduct a spacewalk as part of the Expedition 59 crew at the International Space Station, along with Canadian Space Agency flight controller,

Kristen Facciol serving as console at [NASA's Johnson Space Center](#) in Houston.

Facciol revealed her announcement March 1 via Twitter when she alerted her followers she would be "on console providing support for the FIRST ALL FEMALE SPACEWALK."

Since 1998, there have been 213 spacewalks at the space station. The U.S. has seen 160 spacewalks in U.S. spacesuits, while Russia has had 53 spacewalks in Russian spacesuits.

According to NASA, [spacewalks](#) allow astronauts to work on the outside of their spacecraft while in space, conduct science experiments as well as test out any new equipment. Spacewalks outside of the space station typically last anywhere from five to eight hours, but it's currently unknown how long this spacewalk will be.

[McClain](#) and Koch were selected to be NASA astronauts in 2013. McClain is currently part of the Expedition 58 crew that launched back in December 2018 and will also serve on Expedition 59.

Koch meanwhile, will serve as a flight engineer for Expedition 59 and 60, the former of which is scheduled to launch on March 14. This is McClain's first time in space and it will also be Koch's first spaceflight.

Another spacewalk is expected to take place before the all-female one. McClain is scheduled to conduct another spacewalk with fellow NASA astronaut Tyler "Nick" Hague on March 22.

## Age is no obstacle: Soldiers complete Army's toughest schools after 40

By Chad Garland

Stars and Stripes, March 5, 2019



*This screenshot from a Jan. 30 U.S. Army video shows Master Sgt. Jole Alvarez of 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) based at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., discussing his reasons for completing Ranger School at age 42 in December 2018. (Austin Pope/U.S. Army)*

A weapons expert with 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne), Master Sgt. Jole Alvarez had completed some of the most challenging courses the Army has to offer, but Ranger School eluded him for two decades.

He'd been slated to attend in 1999, but instead was sent to Combat Diver Qualification Course first. Then the 9/11 attacks kicked off years of high operations tempo that kept him posted overseas or deployed much of the time since. But, late last year, he got his chance.

"They called me 'Old Man Jole' or 'The Old Man,'" Alvarez said of his peers and instructors in a recent interview. For him, it was a chance to "get amongst the younger guys and see where you sit."

Alvarez earned his Ranger tab at Fort Benning, Ga., in December at 42, nearly two decades older than the average student, about half of whom typically fall out before completing the 62-day leadership and small unit tactics course. Alvarez is one of two soldiers to recently complete physically grueling courses at a time in their lives when many soldiers might be tempted to coast into retirement.

Also in December, Sgt. 1st Class John Slocum, 56, completed the Army's Air Assault School — often billed as the toughest 10-day course in the Army — at Fort Bliss, Texas. Officials there believe he may be the course's oldest graduate.

"It's one of my better accomplishments," Slocum said. "This one here is something I wanted."

Students at the school learn skills for combat helicopter insertion, sling load rigging and rappelling, among others. Perhaps the only same-length Army course that's tougher is the pre-trial for aspiring combat divers, known as the Maritime Assessment Course, said Alvarez, the Green Beret.

In April, Slocum will have served 22 years in the military, beginning as a Marine artillery observer in 1981. After a four-year hitch in the Corps and a year in the National Guard, the New York native left the service until 2003, when he joined the Army Reserves as a cannon crewmember, becoming a drill sergeant in 2004.

For the next decade and a half, he sought to attend Air Assault School, but it was tough to get a seat as a reservist, he said in a recent interview. His opportunity came when he got active duty orders to Fort Hood, Texas, where he's now serving as an observer controller/trainer on ranges there.

Four times he completed a pre-trial, as required by his brigade, but didn't get a slot in the school. His fifth time was a charm.

Despite the preparation, which also included twice weekly ruck marches and lots of running on his own, it wasn't easy, he said.

<https://www.stripes.com/news/age-is-no-obstacle-soldiers-complete-army-s-toughest-schools-after-40-1.571375>

“They broke me off pretty good,” he said in an email. “I think if I did this at a younger age [it would have] been better, but it was something I had my mind set I wanted to do.”



*Sgt. 1st Class John Slocum, center, is pictured here after graduating from Air Assault School at Fort Bliss, Texas, at the age of 56 in December 2018. Slocum is believed to be the oldest graduate from the school. (Courtesy John Slocum)*

Physically, he often need more recovery time than younger soldiers, but he felt he held his own, partly because a younger soldier had “put me through the wringer” to prepare. The classroom side of the course was what challenged him the most, since he wasn’t used to cramming for tests, he said.

Some troops in their late 40s and early 50s have completed the course, and Slocum said he’d heard of one other soldier over 55 who’d attempted it, though he quit on the 12-mile ruck march, the course’s final event.

“I get that far, I’m crawling,” Slocum said.

Alvarez is also among a rarified group of older Ranger School graduates, though not the oldest. That distinction is held by Rob Fortenberry, a command sergeant major with the Fort Drum, N.Y.-based 10th Mountain Division’s 2nd Brigade Combat Team, who graduated at age 45 in July 2016, according to an Army release.

Age has some advantages for students who train 20 hours a day with minimal food and sleep, said Col. Chris Colavita, who earned his tab a few months shy of his 40th birthday in 2009. Younger soldiers often need more sleep and may lack perspective on the course’s hardships.

“They can only hurt you so much,” Colavita said of the instructors.

About four hours was a good night’s sleep for him in his regular life at the time, he said. A more difficult adjustment was mental — he hadn’t had to lead a squad or platoon for about 15 years.

At 42, no one would have held it against him that he didn’t have a Ranger tab, Alvarez said, but completing the course was about living up to the Special Forces ethos. He’d have done the school even if it took five more years, he said.

“If you’re going to talk the talk, you better walk the walk,” he said. “I’m not going to rest on my laurels.”

Used to putting in “hard yards” in his daily regimen, he added a couple of road marches to prepare for Ranger School, he said. Years of experience as a combat diver helped keep him going whenever the course got particularly tough.

“I can breathe right now,” he’d say to himself, a reminder that he’d been through worse underwater.

The course did bring unique discomforts, too, such as bitter temperatures during mountain phase in Dahlonga, Ga., which the Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.-based soldier said was probably the coldest he’s ever been.

“I’m still getting used to feeling my fingers and toes,” he said.

A 22-year Army veteran, Alvarez comes from a “lineage of duty to country” that includes grandfathers who served in the storied 101st Airborne and 1st Infantry divisions during World War II and three uncles who

<https://www.stripes.com/news/age-is-no-obstacle-soldiers-complete-army-s-toughest-schools-after-40-1.571375>

served in Vietnam. His younger brother, who fought in Afghanistan, served in the 75th Ranger Regiment and completed Ranger School before him.



*This screenshot from a Jan. 30, 2019, U.S. Army video shows Master Sgt. Jole Alvarez (right) of 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) posing for a photo with a fellow Green Beret after Alvarez, 42, completed Ranger School at Fort Benning, Ga., in December 2018. (Austin Pope/U.S. Army)*

Alvarez himself has deployed many times since 9/11, he said, and plans to continue serving as long as he can cut it.

“I’ve got a few more years,” he said. “As long as my body’s still holding up, I’m still of sound mind and I’m able to keep up with guys that are half my age, then I still want to give back to my country.”

Slocum is looking to become an Army master fitness trainer and hopes to attend Airborne School, though he’s not sure he’ll get the chance. The typical age cut off for jump school is 35, though older soldiers have earned their wings.

For Alvarez, the delay in going to Ranger School meant he missed out on a few things. He and his younger brother, Staff Sgt. James Perez, had discussed competing together in the Best Ranger competition, but they’ll never get the chance. Perez died in an August 2017 training accident in Texas at age 28.

“He was going to be the guy that pinned my Ranger tab on me,” Alvarez said.

[garland.chad@stripes.com](mailto:garland.chad@stripes.com) Twitter: [@chadgarland](https://twitter.com/chadgarland)



# As Elite Campuses Diversify, A 'Bias Towards Privilege' Persists

By Elissa Nadworny

NPR, March 5, 2019

Elite colleges are making strides to diversify their student bodies, both racially and economically. In the past few years, we've seen most top schools [commit to enrolling](#) more low-income students through financial aid, recruiting efforts and programs for high school students aimed at expanding the pipeline.

But once those students arrive on campus, says Anthony Abraham Jack, they often find the experience isolating and foreign.

"There's a difference between access and inclusion," explains Jack, an assistant professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and author of the new book *The Privileged Poor: How Elite Colleges Are Failing Disadvantaged Students*. "Universities have extended invitations to more and more diverse sets of students but have not changed their ways to adapt to who is on campus."

For his book, Jack profiles low-income students at an unnamed elite college. He puts them into two groups: Those coming from prep schools, and those coming from under-resourced public schools.

In those two groups, he finds key differences but one common problem: "We have paid less attention to what happens when students get on campus than their moment of entry and where they go once they graduate."

Fixing the problem, he argues, means creative and thoughtful solutions, such as keeping dining halls and dorms open during holiday breaks — because not every student can afford a ski trip, or even a bus ticket home.

I spoke with Jack recently about his ideas for improving life — and outcomes — for these students. Our conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

***Back in 2015, you wrote an opinion piece about how elite schools were [recruiting low-income students from elite prep schools](#). You called those students the "privileged poor," which is now the title of your new book. How did that come to be?***

I was a Head Start kid who went to public school up to 11th grade, and my senior year was an anomaly in a private school. I thought my senior year was just a detour; a one-off. But when I got to Amherst College, turns out that prep school was an HOV lane for poor students.

A lot of my classmates were poor like me, but they went to Andover and Exeter, Saint Paul and Choate. All of these boarding schools that I had never heard of. They were talking about studying abroad for their junior year to learn the language. They were talking about snow-tubing trips that the school paid for. In graduate school, we started reading a lot of the sociology of education, and I didn't see my classmates in the literature.

***Your research shows that those students have a different experience on campus than low-income students coming from underserved public schools. Can you explain?***

There are two groups of low-income students on campus, and they have two sets of experiences. I've termed them the doubly disadvantaged and the privileged poor. The biggest difference between the two, according to how students told their stories, is: one group felt more at home, and the other felt culture shock.

<https://www.npr.org/2019/03/05/699977122/as-elite-campuses-diversify-a-bias-towards-privilege-persists>

The privileged poor, the students who went to the private schools, they knew the hidden curriculum, the hidden rules that govern these places. They felt more comfortable, and they directed themselves in a way that was more similar to their middle-class peers. The doubly disadvantaged, they felt out of place and experienced that culture shock and isolation.

***So the doubly disadvantaged are low-income students who don't have this institutional knowledge. How does that manifest?***

We have been teaching students from more privileged backgrounds for so long, that we take a lot for granted on a college campus. Mental health offices, career service offices, they are so used to students being more proactive and entering their doors because they've been taught that if you want something, you go out and get it. The fact that you have to go seek things out, that's an unspoken rule on a college campus that disproportionately hurts low-income students from disadvantaged high schools. There is a bias towards privilege on a college campus that permeates so many things that we do.

***The folks making policy in higher education tend to be folks where the system worked for them. Your book seems to push readers to try and change their perspective.***

I hope that anyone who reads this book asks one important question: What else do I take for granted? The big thing I uncover in the book is the hidden curriculum that operates on the college campus. On the academic side, how does one engage with different faculty members? The expectation is that students are the ones who are proactive, and yet we use terms like office hours. Professors often say *when* office hours are, but never *what* they are. Only a certain segment of the population has ever heard the term, let alone had the opportunity to master what skills you need to make the most use out of office hours.

It's not just what students know that we take for granted; it's also what they can afford. Spring break is a perfect example. "Oh, spring break! You're going to go home or you're going to have some fun in the sun!" Often times, that's actually not the case. For a lot of our students, home is not necessarily the place you want to go.

Universities are actually saying, "Come here. Money will not be a barrier to your entry or what you want to do." That is what these colleges are saying, but what's actually happening is, when students get on campus, they realize just how the social undercurrents of this place, and the official policies of the place, make them feel like second-class citizens in a first-class world.

It has implications not just for your GPA and retention, but also for your use of resources on campus. It's about who feels comfortable going into the career service office to get help with the résumé, who feels comfortable getting help with a mental health diagnosis, who feels comfortable doing all those little small things that are the foundation for one's future when you leave college.

***As colleges recruit more low-income students, there have been efforts to integrate these students into campus life. In your book, you talk about how some of those initiatives are well-intentioned but sometimes do more harm than good. Can you give me an example?***

At the school that I study, there was a program that gave students free tickets to events. That's actually a good thing because those extra university events can quickly add up over the course of a semester. The school decided to protect low-income students from being viewed as getting a scholarship ticket, so they created a separate line to pick up tickets for those who are on scholarship. How that ultimately plays out in public is that a whole bunch of white and Asian students are in the paying line, and then on the opposite end of the room, you have a line of people who are picking up the free tickets. That line is mostly black and Latino with Asian and white students sprinkled in. It becomes the opposite of invisible; it becomes highlighted. You are literally separate from your peers. You can't help but think about the Jim Crow South.

<https://www.npr.org/2019/03/05/699977122/as-elite-campuses-diversify-a-bias-towards-privilege-persists>

Those kinds of policies undercut moments where students feel they are full members of the community. It cuts at the trust that students have not just with the institution, but with the people who are in positions to help them.

***There are about 20 million students going to college today — and only a very small percentage of them go to an elite school, like Harvard or Yale. So why should we care about what happens on those campuses?***

A lot of things that I study happen at all schools. The miscommunication between faculty and students has been documented across higher education, at community colleges and four-year schools.

I tried to remove all of the things that we know hurt students' integration into college, like living off campus, commuting and working. I'm showing you that even at a place like this, even under the best of conditions, higher education still privileges a narrow set of experiences that are more likely to be held by those of middle-class and upper-middle-class families.

If I'm able to show that food insecurity exists at schools like Yale, Harvard, Penn and Princeton, how then do you think it manifests itself at the University of Wisconsin or at Texas Tech, or at the regional college? Yes, I study the elites. But more importantly, I study how poverty and inequality shape how students make it to higher education, and how they move through it.

***So if the privileged poor are more comfortable and prepared for college, might that be a solution? Especially considering the Education Department's push to increase school choice and allow public dollars to be spent on private schools.***

Putting students in private schools is not a social policy; it's an abdication of responsibility. Social policy would be trying to figure out how do we get our underserved K-12 schools to be able to compete, not just with their suburban counterparts, but what if they aspired to be something greater. What would happen if our public schools actually looked more like some of the private schools that we know have a ton of resources? One thing this book actually shows is that when you give low-income students the resources and the experiences of those from more affluent backgrounds, they enter college with the skillset and the orientations to navigate the place successfully. They take advantage of the resources that are available.

It shows that the privileged poor is what happens when you are actually given a shot to succeed and not just a whole bunch of extra weight to hold you down as you try to climb up the ladder that is the American dream. But, I think just sending students to a private school is not scalable, and we're not actually helping all the students that we are here to help.

***So the book is about college, but not really?***

The university is just my site to study something greater. This book is about poverty and inequality. I'm just bringing it to higher education. As universities diversify their campuses, their connections to neighborhoods that previously were overlooked — low-income communities, predominantly minority communities, predominantly immigrant communities, and rural communities — all of those connections become stronger and stronger. And we need to understand how poverty and inequality work, not just to understand a student's education trajectory, but also to understand what can we do for the students who do make it to these schools.

# First black female CMSgt, Air Force pioneer, to be laid to rest

By Stephen Losey

Air Force Times, March 1, 2019



*Chief Master Sgt. Dorothy Holmes, the first black woman to earn the highest enlisted rank in the Air Force, holds a copy of the tribute Colorado Rep. Ed Perlmutter read to her on the floor of the House in 2014. Holmes passed away Feb. 17. (Photo courtesy of The Retired Enlisted Association)*

Retired Chief Master Sergeant Dorothy Holmes [blazed many trails](#) during her three decades in the Air Force.

She was the [first black woman](#) to reach the Air Force's highest enlisted rank. She was the [first woman](#) to retire with 30 years of continuous service in the Air Force. And she was the first female chief master sergeant to be assigned to the Air Force Academy.

But a friend, retired Army Master Sgt. George Smith, remembers her as a wonderful person who was fun to be around — but one with little patience for nonsense, who could grab people's attention with her commanding voice.

"She would tell it like it is, and whether you would like to hear it or not, she would tell it," Smith said in an interview Friday. "She had a lot on the ball."

Smith, who worked with "Dottie" Holmes at The Retired Enlisted Association in the 1980s, remembered how they would visit lawmakers on Capitol Hill to urge them to introduce or vote for pieces of legislation that would help seniors and veterans. And, he said laughing, if one of those lawmakers seemed dismissive of their concerns, Holmes would put him in his place.

"Sometimes, that congressman would say, 'Well, you know, that thing is not important,'" Smith said. "And she would hop on something like that — 'What do you mean it's not important?' And you'd find that congressman kind of crawfishing a little bit: 'Well, er, um, I didn't mean it that way, Ms. Holmes.' Later, when we'd get back together, we would laugh about it, how it appeared that she was just a little kind lady, but when her time comes to talk, she wouldn't hesitate."

Holmes passed away on Feb. 17 at the age of 91, and a memorial service will be held for her Saturday in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

She was born in Philadelphia on Aug. 1, 1927, and joined the Air Force in May 1949, [according to her obituary](#). She began her career in Texas, but spent time in places such as Germany, Japan, Thailand, Puerto Rico, Louisiana, Washington, D.C., and South Dakota over the next three decades.

She played a crucial role in integrating female cadets into the previously all-male Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs.

In 1976, Brig. Gen. Stanley Beck, who was then the academy's commandant of cadets, personally asked for Holmes to come help with the integration.

Rep. Ed Perlmutter, D-Colo., paid tribute to Holmes on the floor of the House of Representatives in 2014, and said she "serve[d] as a role model and mentor for the first class of female cadets."

<https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2019/03/01/first-black-female-cmsgt-air-force-pioneer-to-be-laid-to-rest/>



*Chief Master Sgt. Dorothy Holmes in an undated photo included with her obituary. (Holmes family)*

Holmes' obituary said she became deputy assistant to the superintendent for plans, programs and policies and "stroved to make her job one that helped all cadets."

Holmes was key in helping establish female cadets there, and setting up equal opportunity programs at the academy, her obituary states. She also was a guest lecturer many times in classes there, in addition to her administrative, counseling and mentoring duties.

"Through her courageous service, Chief Holmes charted the path for future generations of women to serve in the military," Perlmutter said in 2014.

When Holmes retired after almost three years at the academy, former Colorado Gov. Richard Lamm issued an executive order declaring May 31, 1979, as Chief Master Sergeant Dorothy W. Holmes Day. She continued to volunteer at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado, not far from the academy, in retirement.

She also served as president of the Women in the Air Force Association for 25 years, according to her obituary. From 1948 to 1976, Women in the Air Force pushed to expand the opportunities for women in the service. In 2016, Holmes attended a reunion of nearly 70 members of the Women in the Air Force program at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland in Texas.

And she served two terms as national president of The Retired Enlisted Association.

Holmes treasured her time in the Air Force, Smith said, and often looked back fondly on those days. If anybody said anything bad about her beloved service, she'd challenge them immediately, he added.

She received the Legion of Merit for her work at the academy, and her other decorations included the Meritorious Service Medal and the Air Force Commendation Medal.

The Air Force in 2009 posted online a photo of Holmes visiting Peterson at a retiree recognition reception. She told the airmen at Peterson during that visit that she hadn't intended to make an entire career out of the Air Force when she joined, but she stayed because she loved her assignments and her work.

Holmes' memorial service, with military honors, will be held Saturday at Angelus Chapel Funeral Directors in Colorado Springs.

# Former service secretaries accuse Pentagon of deceiving Congress on Trump's transgender ban

By Ellen Mitchell

The Hill, March 5, 2019



© Getty Images

Three former Defense Department leaders are accusing Pentagon officials of misleading lawmakers on President Trump's ban on transgender service members.

Former Navy Secretary Ray Mabus, Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James and Army Secretary Eric Fanning – all from the Obama administration – said the Pentagon deceived Congress when officials who testified last week made “the untrue assertion that holding all service members to the same standards affords ‘special accommodations’ to transgender troops.”

“In seeking to justify President Trump's wrong-headed ban on transgender service members at a Congressional hearing last week, Defense Department officials made misleading claims,” the three write in a statement organized by the Palm Center.

“Under inclusive policy that is currently in effect, transgender service members must meet exactly the same fitness and deployability standards as everybody else, but the witnesses ignored data confirming the success of that policy.”

The three also agreed with a statement put out last week by more than 40 retired military officers, which said Trump's policy “contradicts the actual judgment of both current and former senior military leaders, as well as medical research and the experiences our own military and of other militaries.”

Mabus, James and Fanning in 2017 backed a legal effort to block Trump's move to oust transgender troops from the military after he tweeted that “the United States Government will will not accept or allow Transgender individuals to serve in any capacity in the U.S. Military.”

In addition, five professors from the U.S. military service academies have penned a memo detailing “deceptive, erroneous and false assertions” given by the DOD officials in written and verbal testimony.

The officials “misled Congress by asserting falsehoods about readiness and deployment,” the five write in a March 4 document, also organized by the Palm Center.

Then-Defense Secretary James Mattis later released a policy in March 2018 that would allow transgender people to serve in their biological sex.

The ban has already drawn several lawsuits which have so far blocked its implementation.

The Pentagon's top official for personnel policy James N. Stewart defended the policy last week, saying transgender service members will be allowed to continue to serve, though new recruits may be barred if they are diagnosed with “gender dysphoria.”

“The realities associated with the condition called gender dysphoria and the accommodations required for that gender transition in the military are far more complicated than we may assume,” Stewart said in House Armed Services Committee subpanel.

<https://thehill.com/policy/defense/operations/432735-former-service-secretaries-accuse-pentagon-of-deceiving-congress-on>

Stewart also said the Obama administration's policy on transgender service members would "degrade military readiness" in the long term.

The administration has maintained the argument that the transgender policy is "based on professional military judgment."

But transgender individuals and their advocates argue Trump's policy is essentially a ban, much like the now repealed "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy for gay, lesbian and bisexual service members.

Mabus, James and Fanning agree with the parallel, as they write that "There is no defensible rationale for imposing 'don't ask, don't tell' on honorably serving transgender troops."

## International Women's Day 2019 theme is

### #BalanceforBetter: Here's what you need to know

By Marina Pitofsky

USA TODAY, March 7, 2019



*Students raise their fingers during the 'One Billion Rising' campaign to demand an end to violence against women on Valentine's Day in the Loreto girls school in Kolkata Eastern India on Feb. 14, 2019. (Photo: Piyal Adhikary, EPA-EFE)*

From empowerment seminars to street strikes, pop-up art shows to business master classes, female voices will echo across the globe Friday with a resounding message: Women want balance.

#BalanceforBetter is the theme for this year's International Women's Day, which is observed each year on March 8. The 2019 initiative is aimed at gender equality, a greater awareness of discrimination and a celebration of women's achievements, according to the International Women's Day website. That includes reducing the global pay gap between men and women and making sure all are equal – and balanced – in activist movements, boardrooms and beyond.

"It's a time to reflect on the progress for women and call for ways to address the unfinished business in working toward equality," said Rachel Vogelstein, a board member at the National Women's History Museum.

Here is what you need to know about International Women's Day:

#### ***What is International Women's Day?***

The day celebrates "the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women," according to its website.

It is not hosted by any country or specific movement, so organizers encourage women everywhere to host events that are "all about unity, celebration, reflection, advocacy and action – whatever that looks like globally at a local level."

#### ***Where are celebrations taking place?***

From Uganda to the United Kingdom to the U.S., you can search for events in your city and country on the International Women's Day [website](#). Celebrations don't have to be published on the website to mark International Women's Day, though, so check your local events to see events in your area.

#### ***What kind of events celebrate International Women's Day?***

Overseas, there will be commemorations Friday and through the weekend. At Amsterdam's "[Youth Tech Fest](#)," girls 12 to 18 will learn how to code, develop apps and more. In Ireland, mass walkouts were planned for 3 p.m. local time Friday to demand action on various gender-based issues, including violence and harassment against women, the gender pay gap, labor conditions and reproductive rights, [according to TheJournal.ie](#).

In the United States, there will be International Women's Day events in more than 35 cities. Atlanta is home to an [International Women's Day Tea Party](#) for small-business owners. Minneapolis will hold a [FeMNist Day](#) with a breakfast event, workshops and a night market for female-owned businesses.



<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2019/03/07/international-womens-day-2019-balanceforbetter-theme/2904077002/>

Los Angeles organizers are hosting a [women's strike](#) with a march, rally and dance party at the city's Federal Building that targets wars on women, children, migrants and the Earth. A [celebration at Washington Square Park in New York](#) offers women flowers with inspirational messages.

### ***Do I have to go to an event to celebrate International Women's Day?***

You don't have to attend an event to mark International Women's Day. You can also participate by supporting female-owned businesses or by making donations to charity.

At Campaign for Female Education, a non-profit that supports education for girls worldwide, organizers are encouraging everyone to "pause and consider the challenges many women face around the world" and how you can make a difference, according to Brooke Hutchinson, executive director of CAMFED USA.

Hannah Serimian, founder of Boxy Girl, a beauty organizer company, also called for women to create a dialogue among friends, family and coworkers to support women and their passions and ideas.

"Women are great at organizing in their own communities and asking tough questions," Serimian said. "We're living in an amazing time where we can recognize the talents of so many women."

### ***What is the history of International Women's Day?***

International Women's Day was first observed in 1909 when an estimated 15,000 women marched in New York City demanding fair wages, labor standards and guaranteed voting rights, according to the International Women's Day website.

The day was pioneered by socialist and voting rights activists, and by 1911, more than 1 million people celebrated in the United States, the United Kingdom, Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland.

In 1975, the United Nations officially declared the year International Women's Year and made March 8 International Women's Day annually.

### ***How can I celebrate online?***

Organizers are encouraging all women to "strike the pose" with your hands out to represent balance between men and women. You can use the hashtag #BalanceforBetter to spread awareness about the day on social media.

### ***When is International Men's Day?***

International Men's Day is marked each year on Nov. 19. [Celebrated in over 60 countries in 2018](#), the day encourages men to "embrace positive values," "highlight positive role models" and "raise awareness of men's well-being," according to its website.

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### **SEE ALSO:**

[Daring To Ride A Bike And 5 Other Ways Women Are Changing The World](#) [NPR, 2019-03-07]

[Gender parity at work only possible if men do more at home: UN](#) [ABS-CBN, 2019-03-07]

[Annie Lennox pushes for global feminism on Int'l Women's Day](#) [The Associated Press, 2019-03-07]

[New website for women's history to launch Friday](#) [The Associated Press, 2019-03-06]

[Intersectionality: An Invitation For Action On International Women's Day And Beyond](#) [Forbes, 2019-03-06]

[International Women's Day: History, strikes and celebrations](#) [BBC, 2019-03-05]

# Michigan National Guard Gets First Female Infantry Company Commander

By Matthew Cox

Military.com, March 7, 2019



*Capt. Amie Kemppainen takes command of Company B, 3rd Battalion, 126th Infantry at a ceremony at the Grand Valley Armory in Wyoming, Michigan Saturday, March 2nd, 2019. (U.S. Army/Lt. Col. John Hall)*

U.S. Army Capt. Amie Kemppainen made history recently by becoming the first female officer to take command of an infantry company in the Michigan Army National Guard, and among the first female infantry company commanders in the entire Army.

Kemppainen, who took command of B Company, 3rd Battalion, 126th Infantry Regiment, in a March 2 ceremony, is a member of a growing sisterhood that has stepped forward to volunteer for infantry, armor and other direct-action jobs after the Pentagon opened up all combat-arms jobs to women just over three years ago.

"I didn't set out to become the first of anything," Kemppainen said in a March 5 Michigan National Guard news release. "I only want to look back and know that I made a difference, that I encouraged others to do more, and be more, and give more. The fact that I am opening doors for women is great, but I want my actions to be an example of what doing it right looks like, regardless of gender."

The Army has gone through a cultural shift since then-Defense Secretary Ash Carter reversed the regulation banning women from serving in direct-action combat-arms jobs in late December 2015. Carter's decision came just a few months after then-Capt. Kristen Griest and 1st Lt. Shaye Haver became [the first women to successfully complete U.S. Army Ranger School](#).

Since then, 24 women have graduated the grueling 62-day infantry-leadership course known for pushing students to their mental and physical limits, according to Megan Reed, a spokeswoman for Army Training and Doctrine Command.

Kemppainen originally enlisted in the Michigan Guard in 1996 and deployed with the 1462nd Engineer Company to Iraq in 2004, the release states. She attended Officer Candidate School and was commissioned in 2009, the release states.

Around the time of Carter's decision, Kemppainen was serving as a recruiting and retention officer responsible for leading the team that would recruit some of the first female infantry soldiers, the release states.

She decided to take on the challenge herself and volunteered for the Maneuver Captains Career Course, the release states.

Kemppainen is one of 93 women who have graduated from the course at Fort Benning, Georgia. It covers infantry, armor and aviation branches, Reed said.

Following graduation, Kemppainen served as a rifle platoon leader for 15 months, as well as the executive officer for the infantry company, the release states.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/03/07/michigan-national-guard-gets-first-female-infantry-company-commander.html>

"In these roles, Capt. Kempainen walked the same miles, chewed the same dirt, and endured the same hardships as every other member of the Black Knight Company, all while gaining the critical perspective into infantry brotherhood," Lt. Col. Joseph Cannon, commander of 3rd Battalion, 126th Infantry Regiment, said in the release. "She understands the tough love between 'grunts,' and she accrued the crusty mortar which coheres infantrymen together. By rolling up her sleeves, getting into the trenches and working hard, she earned the respect required as an infantry leader and the trust of the men."

-- *Matthew Cox can be released at [matthew.cox@military.com](mailto:matthew.cox@military.com)*

# Poll: About half of Marylanders oppose gender-neutral driver's licenses

By Ovetta Wiggins

The Washington Post, March 5, 2019



*The Maryland State House is seen reflected in a window in Annapolis. (Matt McClain/The Washington Post)*

Roughly half of Maryland voters oppose a bill that is moving through the General Assembly that would allow gender-neutral driver's licenses, according to a poll released Tuesday by Gonzales Research and Media Services.

According to the findings, 51 percent of Marylander voters said they do not favor giving drivers the option to identify as “unspecified” on their licenses. The legislation [approved by the Senate last month](#) would require the state Motor Vehicle Administration to issue licenses or identification cards that show an “M” for male drivers, an “F” for female drivers and an “X” for drivers who don't identify with a specific gender.

The legislation has been heard by a committee in the House of Delegates and is awaiting a vote there.

A smaller 37 percent of the respondents said they favor the bill, while 12 percent did not answer the poll question.

The poll, which surveyed 817 registered voters, was conducted from Feb. 22 through March 1. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

The poll findings, much like the 32-to-14 vote in the Senate last month, largely fall along partisan lines. Sixty percent of registered Democrats and 36 percent of unaffiliated voters favor gender-neutral licenses. Twelve percent of Republicans said they support the idea.

State Sen. William C. Smith (D-Montgomery), the lead sponsor of the bill, told his colleagues last month that 11 countries and five states — including California, Colorado and Maine — offer gender-neutral options on identification cards.

The District, [which issued its first gender-neutral ID in 2017](#), is believed to have been the first U.S. jurisdiction to do so. Next year, the city will allow families to [list their child as non-binary](#) on school enrollment forms. And last month, several major airlines said they would allow passengers to identify as “unspecified” or “undisclosed” when they buy tickets.

In the Maryland Senate last month, several GOP lawmakers who opposed the bill questioned whether non-binary licenses would be “accurate.”

“Are we going to call them X men?” said Minority Leader J.B. Jennings (R-Harford). “That’s your identification. . . . When it comes to that information, I think it should be accurate.”

The remarks drew outrage from advocates. State Sen. Mary L. Washington (D-Baltimore City), the only openly gay member of the Senate and a co-sponsor of the bill, told her colleagues that requiring Marylanders with non-binary gender identities to list themselves as either male or female is akin to telling them to lie on a government document.

*Scott Clement contributed to this report.*

# Proposed order on campus speech follows wave of complaints

By Kevin Freking and Collin Binkley  
The Associated Press, March 5, 2019



*In this March 2, 2019, photo, President Donald Trump speaks at Conservative Political Action Conference in Oxon Hill, Md. Trump's proposed executive order to protect free speech on college campuses follows a growing chorus of complaints from members of Congress and others that the nation's universities are attempting to silence conservative voices by heckling, disinviting and otherwise discouraging their presence. (AP Photo/Jose Luis Magana)*

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's proposed executive order to protect free speech on college campuses follows a growing chorus of complaints from conservatives that the nation's universities are attempting to silence their voices when they're heckled, disinvited or their presence on campus is otherwise discouraged.

Critics counter that conservatives are turning the shared goal of protecting free speech into a partisan fight. It's unclear what Trump's order will contain, but the administration has been laying the groundwork for it for months.

The Justice Department has filed statements in various lawsuits siding with students who had alleged that schools had infringed on their right to freedom of speech. Former Attorney General Jeff Sessions opined at a forum last fall that the issue had reached a pivotal point, saying "it is time to stand up to the bullies on campus and in our culture."

Education Secretary Betsy DeVos made a similar assessment, saying "administrators too often attempt to shield students from ideas they subjectively decide are hateful or offensive or injurious, or ones they just don't like."

Trump's proposed executive order, unveiled Saturday during a speech to conservative activists, has drawn criticism from some higher education leaders including President Robert Zimmer of the University of Chicago, a frequent champion of free speech. In a campus email, Zimmer said new regulation would be "a grave error" and would give federal officials dangerous authority to interfere in campus speech issues.

"This opens the door to any number of troubling policies over time that the federal government, whatever the political party involved, might adopt on such matters," he said. "It makes the government, with all its power and authority, a party to defining the very nature of discussion on campus."

In his speech Saturday, Trump highlighted the case of Hayden Williams, who was recruiting on Feb. 19 at the University of California, Berkeley, for the conservative group Talking Points USA when two men approached and one punched Williams during a confrontation captured on student cellphones. Neither Williams nor the man arrested for the attack are affiliated with UC Berkeley.

Trump told the conservatives in the audience that Williams "took a hard punch in the face for all of us." "If they want our dollars, and we give it to them by the billions, they've got to allow people like Hayden and many other great young people, and old people, to speak," Trump said. "And if they don't, it will be very costly."

<https://www.apnews.com/efaf1a27751c4733be771aa28068f80e>

The University of California system issued a statement Monday calling Trump's proposal "misguided and unnecessary."

"Free speech is a fundamental value of the University of California and we already have strong policies in place that protect the free expression of ideas, regardless of political persuasion," said Janet Napolitano, the system's president. "We do not need the federal government to mandate free speech on college campuses — that tradition is alive and thriving."

There were multiple hearings on campus free speech during the past two years when Republicans were in control of both chambers of Congress, though an attempt to legislate on the matter made little headway. A bill from former Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, that would have banned universities from restricting students' political speeches to certain outdoor areas on campus if that activity is lawful, did not make it through committee.

The hearings followed conservative commentator Ann Coulter canceling a speech at the University of California, Berkeley, amid fears of violent student protests. Texas Southern University in Houston canceled a speech from Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, in the face of student opposition.

Democratic lawmakers have said free speech infringement is just as likely to come from the political right as from the political left. Rep. Bobby Scott, D-Va., encouraged the administration during a congressional hearing last fall to take action on what he called a troubling rise in hate speech on campuses.

"We have seen active investigation of claims of campus free speech violations at public universities brought by conservative activists, but nothing investigating the explosion in incidences of racially motivated hate speech or actions on campus," Scott said.

Terry Hartle, senior vice president at the American Council on Education, called the proposed order a "solution in search of a problem," adding that free speech is already a core value in American higher education.

"I understand it's sort of a red meat issue for conservative political organizations, but in the real world it's not as big a deal as they would like to believe," he said.

Hartle worries an executive order would empower provocateurs who seek to roil campus audiences, and if campus events threaten to become violent, it could force schools to choose between preserving their federal funding and ensuring campus safety.

Debates over free speech have flared up at colleges across the country in recent years, often sparked by speakers with widely polarizing views. Protesters have shut down events featuring conservative speakers at schools including Berkeley, Middlebury College and several others.

In some cases, schools have canceled events over fears of violence. Several took that step following a 2017 white supremacist rally that started at the University of Virginia and later became violent. Days later, Texas A&M canceled a campus event billed as a follow-up to the Virginia march.

Danny Pugh, Texas A&M's vice president for student affairs, said the school is "in good shape" to handle any executive order, but he added that safety will continue be a priority when weighing free-speech questions. Still, he noted that the vast majority of campus events, even those featuring controversial speakers, go smoothly.

"We sort of get blinded by the provocative piece," he said. "For every one of those, there are thousands plus on our campus that happen without fanfare."

<https://www.apnews.com/efaf1a27751c4733be771aa28068f80e>

Some observers have raised concerns that an executive order could force religious institutions to host speakers with views that run counter to the school's values. But some prominent religious colleges said they support Trump's proposal, including leaders at Liberty University, a Christian school in Virginia.

"Not only do we encourage speakers with views conflicting with the university's to come, we pester them to come," said Scott Lamb, vice president at the school, adding that recent speakers have included former Democratic President Jimmy Carter and Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont, an independent.

The school's president, Jerry Falwell Jr., said in an opinion piece for Fox News that the "silencing of conservatives on college campuses is serious problem that has spread across our nation."

"Even when administrators don't actively prevent conservatives from speaking on campus, individual extremists sometimes take matters into their own hands by physically assaulting the speakers," he said.

*Binkley reported from Boston.*

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**SEE ALSO:**

[Questions abound after Trump threatens to strip funding from colleges that don't support free speech](#) [*The Washington Post*, 2019-03-04]

## VA Secretary Rejects Push for Gender-Neutral Motto

By Richard Sisk

Military.com, March 1, 2019



*Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie testifies during a hearing of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, on Capitol Hill, Wednesday, Sept. 26, 2018 in Washington. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon)*

Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie said his reverence for the majestic language of Abraham Lincoln will not permit a change to the department's iconic motto to make it more gender neutral.

"I'm not arrogant enough to say I want to change Abraham Lincoln's words," he said at a House Veterans Affairs Committee hearing Wednesday.

Wilkie said, "I am not in favor of changing the motto" taken from Lincoln's epic second inaugural address, in which he said one of the nation's duties following the Civil War was "To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan."

The motto should never be interpreted to mean the department is not committed to equality of service, Wilkie added.

"My motto is that we serve all veterans," he said.

"I hope someday you will change your opinion on that," said Rep. Kathleen Rice, D-New York, who suggested that Lincoln himself would have favored a change to account for today's female veterans.

"In keeping with Lincoln's focus on equality for all, I'm sure if he were alive today he would say women should be acknowledged as well," and shouldn't be left off the motto "just because they didn't serve back then," she said.

Last year, Rice and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-New York, proposed a revised motto: "To fulfill President Lincoln's promise 'To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan' by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's veterans."

Advocacy groups have recommended another version: "To care for those who shall have borne the battle and their families and survivors."

That version of the motto [popped up last month on programs at a VA event](#), Military.com's Patricia Kime reported, but VA officials said it was a mistake. The altered version of the motto was [captured in a Twitter photo](#) by Stars and Stripes.

-- Richard Sisk can be reached at [Richard.Sisk@Military.com](mailto:Richard.Sisk@Military.com).



# Miscellaneous

# Ahead of court ruling, Census Bureau seeks citizenship data

By Garance Burke and Frank Bajak

The Associated Press, March 7, 2019

As the U.S. Supreme Court weighs whether the Trump administration can ask people if they are citizens on the 2020 Census, the Census Bureau is quietly seeking comprehensive information about the legal status of millions of immigrants.

Under a proposed plan, the Department of Homeland Security would provide the Census Bureau with a broad swath of personal data about noncitizens, including their immigration status, The Associated Press has learned. A pending agreement between the agencies has been in the works since at least January, the same month a federal judge in New York blocked the administration from adding the citizenship question to the 10-year survey.

On Wednesday, a federal judge in California also declared that adding the citizenship question to the Census was unconstitutional, saying the move “threatens the very foundation of our democratic system.”

The data that Homeland Security would share with Census officials would include noncitizens’ full names and addresses, birth dates and places, as well as Social Security numbers and highly sensitive alien registration numbers, according to a document signed by the Census Bureau and obtained by AP.

Such a data dump would be apparently unprecedented and give the Census Bureau a view of immigrants’ citizenship status that is even more precise than what can be gathered in door-to-door canvassing, according to bureau research.

Six former Census and DHS officials said they were not aware that individuals’ citizenship status had ever before been shared with the Census. “Generally, the information kept in a system of records is presumed to be private and can’t be released unless it fits with a certain set of defined exceptions,” said Leon Rodriguez, who led the DHS agency responsible for citizenship under the Obama administration.

The move raises questions as to what the Trump administration seeks to do with the data and concerns among privacy and civil rights activists that it could be misused.

Census spokesman Michael Cook said the agreement was awaiting signatures at DHS, but that Census expected it would be finalized “as soon as possible.”

“The U.S. Census Bureau routinely enters into agreements to receive administrative records from many agencies, including our pending agreement with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, to assist us in our mission to provide quality statistics to the American public,” Cook said in a statement. “By law, the Census Bureau does not return any records to the Department of Homeland Security or any of its components, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement.”

Jessica Collins, a spokeswoman for Citizenship and Immigration Services, said no agreement has been finalized. She said the purpose of such agreements is to help improve the reliability of population estimates for the next Census.

“The information is protected and safeguarded under applicable laws and will not be used for adjudicative or law enforcement purposes,” Collins said.

Civil rights groups accuse the White House of pursuing a citizenship question because it would discourage noncitizens from participating in the Census and lead to less federal money and representation in Congress for states with large immigrant populations. Census researchers say including the question could yield significant underreporting for immigrants and communities of color.

<https://www.apnews.com/0f33f3454d7f4fd78803455d4da672c6>

Under the pending three-year information-sharing agreement, the Census Bureau would use the DHS data to better determine who is a citizen and eligible to vote by “linking citizenship information from administrative records to Census microdata.”

“All uses of the data are solely for statistical purposes, which by definition means that uses will not directly affect benefits or enforcement actions for any individual,” according to the 13-page document signed by a Census official.

Amy O’Hara, who until 2017 directed Census Bureau efforts to expand data-sharing with other agencies, said she was surprised a plan was in the works for sharing alien numbers, which are assigned to immigrants seeking citizenship or involved in law enforcement action.

“I wish that we were not on this path,” she said. “If the citizenship question hadn’t been added to the Census, this agreement never would have been sought.”

In previous administrations, government lawyers advised Census researchers to use a minimal amount of identifying data to get their jobs done, said O’Hara, now co-director of Georgetown University’s census research center. During her tenure, the bureau never obtained anything as sensitive as alien numbers, which O’Hara called “more radioactive than fingerprints.”

Some privacy groups worry the pending agreement is an end-run around the courts.

“What’s going on here is they are trying to circumvent the need for a citizenship question by using data collected by another agency for a different purpose,” Jeramie Scott, an attorney at the Electronic Privacy Information Center. “It’s a violation of people’s privacy.”

The agreement would bar the bureau from sharing the data with outside agencies. But confidentiality provisions have been circumvented in the past.

During World War II Congress suspended those protections, and the bureau shared data about Japanese-Americans that was used to help send 120,000 people to internment camps. Most were U.S. citizens. From 2002-2003, the Census Bureau provided DHS with population statistics on Arab-Americans that activists complained was a breach of public trust, even if the sharing was legal.

The quiet manner in which the agencies pursued sharing records could stoke concerns that the Trump administration may be seeking to create a registry of noncitizens, said Kenneth Prewitt, who was Census director from 1998-2001 and is now a Columbia University professor.

Census scholars say that could not happen without new legislation, which is not likely under the Democratic majority in the House of Representatives.

In mid-April, the Supreme Court will hear arguments as to whether the 2020 Census can include a citizenship question, with a decision expected weeks later.

Next week, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, whose department oversees the census, is set to testify before Congress on his role in the controversy.

California Democratic Rep. Jimmy Gomez, who sits on the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, said he was concerned to learn of the data-sharing proposal and that Ross would face related questions.

“The news of this proposed plan will surely send shockwaves through immigrant communities across the country,” Gomez said Wednesday. “This new development raises even more questions about the motivations behind this untested citizenship question and Secretary Ross better be ready to answer them.”

<https://www.apnews.com/0f33f3454d7f4fd78803455d4da672c6>

About 44 million immigrants live in the United States — nearly 11 million of them illegally. The 10-year headcount is based on the total resident population, both citizens and noncitizens.

The Census figures hugely in how political power and money are distributed in the U.S., and underreporting by noncitizens would have an outsized impact in states with larger immigrant populations. Political clout and federal dollars are both at stake because 10-year survey results are used to distribute electoral college votes and congressional district seats, and allocate more than \$880 billion a year for services including roads, schools and Medicare.

The push to get a clearer picture of the number of noncitizens in the U.S. comes from an administration that has implemented hard-line policies to restrict immigration in numerous agencies.

Against advice of career officials at the Census Bureau, Ross decided last year to add the citizenship question to the 10-year headcount, saying the Justice Department requested the question to improve enforcement of the federal Voting Rights Act.

Some prominent GOP lawmakers endorsed the citizenship question, saying it would lead to more accurate data, and a joint fundraising committee for Trump's re-election campaign and the Republican National Committee used it as a fundraising tool. Immigrants' rights groups and multiple Democratic-led states, cities and counties filed suit, arguing that the question sought to discourage the Census participation of minorities.

A citizenship question has not appeared on the once-in-a-decade headcount since 1950, though it has been on the American Community Survey, for which the Census Bureau annually polls 3.5 million households.

Documents and testimony in a New York trial showed that Ross began pressing for a citizenship question soon after he became secretary in 2017, and that he consulted Steve Bannon, President Donald Trump's former chief strategist, and then-Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, a vocal advocate of tough immigration laws who also has advised the president. Emails showed that Ross himself had invited the Justice Department request to add the citizenship question.

A March 2018 memo to Ross from the Census Bureau's chief scientist says the DHS data on noncitizens could be used to help create a "comprehensive statistical reference list of current U.S. citizens." The memo discusses how to create 'baseline citizenship statistics' by drawing on administrative records from DHS, the Social Security Administration, State Department and the Internal Revenue Service, in addition to including the citizenship question in the census.

In January, New York federal judge Jesse Furman ruled that Ross was "arbitrary and capricious" in proposing the question.

The new data comes from Citizenship and Immigration Services, a DHS agency that has taken on a larger role in enforcing immigration restrictions under Trump.

After Francis Cissna took over as director in October 2017, the agency initiated a "denaturalization task force" aimed at investigating whether immigrants obtaining their citizenship fraudulently. The agency also has slashed the refugee program to historic lows and proposed reinterpreting immigration law to screen whether legal immigrants are likely to draw on the public welfare system.

Cissna also rewrote the agency's mission statement: "Securing America's promise as a nation of immigrants" became "Securing the homeland and honoring our values."

# As grateful Iowa soldiers watch, Afghan man who risked his life for them becomes an American

By Tony Leys

Des Moines Register, March 7, 2019



*Nabi Mohammadi and his daughter, Sarah, 3, at his U.S. citizenship ceremony March 1, 2019, at the federal courthouse in Des Moines. (Photo: Tony Leys/Des Moines Register)*

Nabi Mohammadi, who spent years risking his life for Americans, became an American last week.

The soft-spoken native of Afghanistan, [who helped Iowa National Guard troops](#) patrol a violent region of his homeland, took the U.S. citizenship oath at the federal courthouse in Des Moines.

“This is something I hadn’t even dreamed about. This is unbelievable,” he said before the ceremony. “I’m so happy to live in a place with peace and freedom for my family. It’s what everybody wants.”

A few minutes later, he and 61 other immigrants raised their right hands, renounced allegiance to any other government, [then pledged to support and defend](#) the Constitution of the United States of America.

The joyful courtroom audience included several of Mohammadi’s friends from the Iowa National Guard, who’d seen him support and defend America plenty of times. He served as their interpreter in 2010 and 2011, accompanying them on scores of patrols through a mountainous area of Afghanistan near the Pakistan border.

Taliban bombs were common, and friends were hard to identify. The Iowa soldiers said Mohammadi volunteered to go on extra patrols, up to three a day. Each time he went out, he put himself and his family at risk of being killed for helping the Americans.

He’d previously done the same thing for National Guard units from Georgia and Vermont, which had rotated through the same outpost. His reward was \$700 per month, plus the promise that he could apply for a visa to move to America.

The U.S. soldiers were struck by the slight young man’s courage, determination and intelligence.

Mohammadi, 28, grew up in northern Afghanistan. The dominant language there is Dari, a dialect of what people in Iran speak. He decided as a teenager to become an interpreter for the U.S. troops. That meant he had to learn two foreign languages — English and Pashto, which is the dominant tongue in eastern Afghanistan.

His accomplishment was akin to an English-speaking American teen learning to interpret between people speaking Polish and Chinese.

His Iowa Guard comrades included Sgt. Dalton Jacobus, who helped Mohammadi fill out his visa application while they were stationed together at Combat Outpost Herrera.

Mohammadi met all the requirements for a special visa program designated for Iraqis and Afghans who worked with U.S. troops. He gained a prominent sponsor in Jacobus’ father, retired National Guard Col. Todd Jacobus. But his application was repeatedly snagged in a bureaucratic snarl, and the Iowa National Guard troops came home in the summer of 2011 without Mohammadi.

<https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/2019/03/03/afghan-interpreter-iowa-national-guard-us-citizenship-iraq-afghanistan-war-trump-constitution/3032929002/>

A couple weeks after the Iowans left, the interpreter was riding with Oklahoma National Guard troops when an insurgent's bomb exploded under their armored truck. Mohammadi was slammed into the roof, injuring his neck, back and legs. A doctor told him he was lucky not to be paralyzed.

After a few months of treatment, he returned to work as an interpreter in the capital city of Kabul and continued to wait for his U.S. visa. Dalton Jacobus and other Iowa Guard troops read that it could take years for people like their friend to gain permission to immigrate to America. They feared he wouldn't survive that long.

The Iowa soldiers wrote letter after letter to the State Department. They made call after call to members of Congress. They vouched for their interpreter to every official they could reach.

"If we trusted him enough to follow us around in combat, I don't know what more you need to trust him with," Jacobus said at the time.



*Nabi and Sanam Mohammadi, their daughter, Sarah, and their son, Arman, at the federal courthouse in Des Moines, where Nabi took the citizenship oath on March 1, 2019. (Photo: Tony Leys/Des Moines Register)*

Eventually, it worked.

Mohammadi gained a special visa in 2013. He moved to Des Moines with his wife, Sanam, and their baby son, Arman. The Iowa soldiers helped them furnish a small apartment near Drake University. Three years ago, Arman was joined by a baby sister, Sarah.

The Manpower employment agency helped Nabi Mohammadi find a job at Principal Financial Group. He's now an information technology specialist there, helping employees figure out their computer problems. He's also finishing an associate's degree at Des Moines Area Community College, where he's taking math and science classes. He plans to transfer to Grand View University in the fall, where he hopes to get a bachelor's degree in two more years.

He somehow finds time to coach his son's soccer team. On weekend nights, after he helps put the children to bed, he goes out and drives for Uber.

Sanam Mohammadi, who recently passed her citizenship test and will soon take the oath, is attending DMACC and plans to become a nurse.

The couple bought a house on Des Moines' northwest side, and Nabi Mohammadi is helping pay for the education of five siblings in Afghanistan.

The American part of the Afghanistan war is winding down after more than 17 years. The United States has pulled most of its troops out of the country, and President Donald Trump has talked about bringing the rest home.

Mohammadi worries about what will happen to other Afghans who helped Americans during the war, including by working as interpreters. If the U.S. pulls out, he said, "that will definitely put them at risk." Some have already been killed. He knows former interpreters who have fled Afghanistan in desperation and immigrated illegally to Europe.

<https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/2019/03/03/afghan-interpreter-iowa-national-guard-us-citizenship-iraq-afghanistan-war-trump-constitution/3032929002/>

[The International Refugee Assistance Project](#), which urges the U.S. government to let more refugees in, says the United States is not living up to its pledge to assist people in Afghanistan and Iraq who supported American troops.



*Former Iowa National Guard Sgt. Dalton Jacobus, left, helped Afghan interpreter Nabi Mohammadi gain a visa to move to the United States. Jacobus was one of several Iowa soldiers who attended Mohammadi's citizenship ceremony at the federal courthouse in Des Moines on March 1, 2019. (Photo: Tony Leys/Des Moines Register)*

Adam Bates, a policy attorney for the national group, said the number of Iraqis allowed into the United States under the special visa program fell from 6,886 in fiscal year 2017 to 140 in fiscal year 2018.

Thousands of Iraqis have applied for those visas, he said, and young men have a particularly hard time obtaining them, no matter how clean their records are. If you're a young Iraqi man who helped American troops, he said, "your wait time for a visa is not months. It's centuries."

Congress recently approved 4,000 additional visa slots for Afghans who helped American troops, Bates said. But many of those applications are delayed for years, including waiting for extensive security checks to clear. The number of such visas approved for Afghans dropped from 4,750 in fiscal year 2017 to 2,410 in fiscal year 2018, he said.

Nabi Mohammadi is grateful for beating the odds to gain a visa for himself and his family.

Before and after Friday's ceremony, volunteers from the League of Women Voters approached the immigrants, asking if they wanted to register to vote. Mohammadi eagerly accepted a volunteer's clipboard and completed the form.

On the section asking about desired party affiliation, he checked "no party." He has no interest in being a Democrat or Republican. He said he will study what candidates stand for and pick the ones who will best serve his new country.

Anita Shodeen, the federal judge presiding over Friday's ceremony, urged the 62 immigrants from 26 countries to cherish their native cultures while embracing American freedom and democracy. "You may hear some people say there is only one true American way to think," she told them. "...Do not believe it."

After the oath was administered and the Pledge of Allegiance recited, the judge stepped down from her bench to hand certificates to each new citizen. High up on the courtroom wall behind her was engraved the Latin phrase, "Justitia Omnibus" – Justice for All.

Nabi Mohammadi's Iowa friends were thrilled to see him get what he deserved.

Former Iowa Guardsman Jon Reed, who now works as a paramedic in Lincoln, Neb., drove to Des Moines to watch his friend become an American. "Nabi, I'm so proud of you," he told Mohammadi. "I'm so glad you made it."

Dalton Jacobus, the former Iowa Guard sergeant, was asked afterward what he'd been thinking as Mohammadi took the oath. Jacobus smiled.

"It's about time," he said.

## Congress moves to guarantee paid family leave

By Jessie Bur

Federal Times, March 5, 2019



*Rep. Steny Hoyer, D-Md., (center) spoke alongside a group of lawmakers, union leaders and advocates to call for the swift passage of new legislation that would guarantee 12 weeks of family leave for federal employees. (Jessie Bur/Staff)*

Rep. Carolyn Maloney, D-N.Y., introduced legislation March 5 that would entitle federal employees to 12 weeks of paid leave for the birth, adoption or foster placement of a child in their family and for

other medical purposes.

“I have literally had federal employees call me and ask me about the timing of the bill and when is it going to pass, because they want to plan their families around it,” Maloney said at a press briefing on the Federal Employees Paid Leave Act.

[Similar legislation](#) was introduced in 2017 and 2018, but both failed to make it past committee consideration.

“We talk a pretty good game about supporting families, but when it comes to giving workers time to bond with their new children or nurse a loved one back to health we unfortunately fall far, far too short,” said Tony Reardon, national president of the National Treasury Employees Union.

And though the bill’s 12 co-sponsors are all Democrats at the moment, past iterations of the bill have had Republican co-sponsors, and Rep. Steny Hoyer, D-Md., said that he was hopeful the bill would pass Congress and make it to President Donald Trump quickly for signature.

“Then I’m hopeful that the president will talk to his daughter. Because his daughter talked about this when she gave a speech at the Republican National Committee,” said Hoyer.

The bill’s previous versions also cleared a hurdle that would have otherwise all but guaranteed opposition by budget hawks in Congress: the Congressional Budget Office score.

“The last time this bill was scored by the Congressional Budget Office, it actually got a positive score, which means that this bill saves money, it makes money rather than it being a debt. Which makes sense,” said Rep. Don Beyer, D-Va.

“You don’t have to find that perfect person again, you don’t have to train her, you don’t have to put all the investment into getting her up to speed.”

Currently new parents working for the federal government may take six to eight weeks of sick leave, followed under the Family Medical Leave Act by an additional 12 weeks of unpaid leave within a year of the birth or adoption of a child.

The new legislation would enable feds to receive a longer period of leave with guaranteed pay before having to use up sick or annual leave and would replace the 12 weeks of unpaid leave currently offered to feds.

The bill is gender neutral, giving both men and women the same amount of potential time off, and also allows feds to take paid time to care for sick family members.



<https://www.federaltimes.com/management/pay-benefits/2019/03/05/congress-moves-to-guarantee-paid-family-leave/>

“Leave to care for family members will become more and more essential as our population ages. By 2060, the size of the population 65 years and older is projected to be larger than the population under 18, which will drastically increase the already dire need for family caregivers,” said Michelle McGrain, federal affairs manager for the National Partnership for Women and Families.

The legislation would also bring the federal government in line with some of the top private sector companies when it comes to family leave.

“Paid family-leave policies have been shown to enhance the recruitment and retention of young professionals, reduce turnover costs significantly and improve employee morale, all of which are challenges facing the federal government,” said National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association National President Ken Thomas in a statement.

“The Federal Employees Paid Leave Act supports best practices in human resources management and bolsters the federal government’s ability to compete with the private sector in its ongoing efforts to provide Americans with a top-performing, highly qualified workforce. We are grateful to Congresswoman Maloney for her leadership on this issue and urge Congress to swiftly pass this long-overdue commonsense legislation.”



**SEE ALSO:**

[Lawmakers' Renewed Push for Paid Family Leave for Feds Includes More Generous Benefits](#) [*Government Executive*, 2019-03-05]

<https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/your-marine-corps/2019/03/01/corps-was-not-adequately-reporting-positive-drug-tests-of-marines-requiring-security-clearances-says-navy-audit/>

# Corps was not adequately reporting positive drug tests of Marines requiring security clearances, finds Navy audit

By Shawn Snow

Marine Corps Times, March 1, 2019



*The Corps is working to ensure reports of positive drug tests that have not made their way to DoD CAF are appropriately reported. (Cpl. Daniel A. Wulz/Marine Corps)*

A Navy audit that concluded in 2017 found the Marine Corps was not adequately reporting [positive drug test](#) results of Marines who occupied job fields that required a security clearance to access classified information.

The audit looked at Defense Manpower Data Center drug test sample data from fiscal year 2013 and found the Marine Corps did not report nearly 66 percent of positive [drug tests](#) to the Department of Defense Consolidated Adjudications Facility, or DoD CAF.

DoD CAF is the entity responsible for determining eligibility for access to classified information for non-intelligence agency DoD personnel. The audit was obtained by Marine Corps Times through a Freedom of Information Act request.

“Headquarters Marine Corps Plans, Policies and Operations [PP&O] is aware of issues with [inadequate reporting](#) of positive incidents of drug testing and are addressing them with commanders and security managers,” Capt. Karoline Foote, a Marine spokeswoman, told Marine Corps Times in an emailed statement.

“We rely on unit leadership and security managers to meet this obligation and are committed to providing oversight and education to help them fulfill this requirement.”

The audit looked at a sample of 110 Marines with 157 confirmed drug test incidents out of a total sample size of 1,557 Marines in fiscal year 2013 who had positive drug tests.

Out of that pool, the audit found that various Marine Corps commands did not adequately report 104 of 157 confirmed positive drug test incidents, or about 66 percent. Those 104 positive drug tests involved 80 Marines.

“We were unable to determine if another 14 of 157 incidents (9 percent) were reported as required,” the report states.

The report further noted that the sample of 110 Marines occupied 85 different job fields, and 73 of those had a prerequisite for a security clearance.

“Because confirmed positive drug test incidents were not reported to DoD CAF, DoD CAF was not able to adjudicate the information,” the audit reads.

“As a result, Marines who tested positive for illegal drugs could have obtained/retained or could now have clearance eligibility necessary to serve in positions and have access to classified information,” the report states.

The Corps is working to ensure reports of positive drug tests that have not made their way to DoD CAF are appropriately reported.

<https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/your-marine-corps/2019/03/01/corps-was-not-adequately-reporting-positive-drug-tests-of-marines-requiring-security-clearances-says-navy-audit/>

“Additionally, as part of the Automated Continuous Evaluation Program, HQMC [headquarters Marine Corps] receives weekly reports from the newly established Defense Vetting Directorate (DVD) that includes positive urinalysis reports that have not been reported to the DoDCAF. HQMC contacts the command to ensure this is done and follows up as necessary,” Foote explained.

Furthermore, the Corps says that all positive drug test results are being reported to unit commanders via the Internet Forensic Toxicology Drug Testing Laboratory portal. Individual commanders then can use that information for legal and administrative action.

Marines are usually separated from the Corps following reports or positive drug tests.

“The commander via his or her security manager is responsible for reporting the positive drug test results to DoD CAF,” Foote said. “This item is inspected in annual reviews at the command level. “

Moreover PP&O reviews this issue every three years, according to Foote.

# Hundreds of immigrant recruits risk ‘death sentence’ after Army bungles data, lawmaker says

By Alex Horton

The Washington Post, March 6, 2019



*U.S. troops are sworn in as naturalized citizens on Nov. 2, 2012, at Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan. (State Department)*

Army officials inadvertently disclosed sensitive information of hundreds of immigrant recruits from nations such as China and Russia, in a breach that could aid hostile governments in persecuting them or their families, a lawmaker and former U.S. officials said.

A spreadsheet intended for internal coordination among recruiters was accidentally sent to recruits and contained names, full Social Security numbers and enlistment dates. The list was sent out inadvertently at least three times between July 2017 and Jan. 2018.

The breach prompted at least a dozen asylum claims amid concern that if the list were intercepted and recruits are [forced to return](#) to autocratic nations such as China or Russia, their enlistments would be harnessed to punish recruits or their families with jail time, harsh interrogations or worse, said Rep. Tom Malinowski (D-N.J.), a former human rights official in the State Department under President Barack Obama.

“If that list is floating out there, it would potentially be incredibly dangerous for [recruits]. In some countries, it can even be a death sentence,” Malinowski told The Washington Post, referring to China and Russia. It is not clear if those governments have obtained the list.

The list contained sensitive data of more than 4,200 immigrant recruits. Of those, more than 900 Chinese Mandarin speakers and dozens of Russian speakers are on the spreadsheet, according to a copy obtained by The Post.

The breach carries a tinge of irony. The Army negligently gave sensitive personnel information to recruits the Pentagon says present [elevated security risk](#), which could then become a propaganda victory for adversarial governments.

Chinese citizens found to seriously breach national security are subject to the death penalty, [according](#) to criminal law there. Punishment for foreign collusion in China ranges from 10 years to life in prison.

A spokesman for the Army did not provide comment on the disclosures.

The data breach has been used as supporting evidence in at least a dozen asylum claims for Chinese recruits who fear government retaliation, according to someone with knowledge of the claims who asked not to be named.

Abhishek Bakshi, an Indian recruit, said he received the list by accident in July 2017 from an Army recruiter in Wisconsin who asked if he wanted to schedule a security interview. The spreadsheet was disturbing, said Bakshi, whose name is also on the list.

“The list could be a risk to those people,” Bakshi told The Post. He filed an affidavit to support one Chinese asylum claim that has since been used for other claims. The breach, he wrote, “increases the danger of persecution of Chinese [recruits].”

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2019/03/06/hundreds-immigrant-recruits-risk-death-sentence-after-army-bungles-sensitive-data/>

Margaret Stock, an immigration attorney and retired Army officer, said she is aware of six Chinese recruits who have been granted asylum. There are dozens of others waiting on pending claims overseen by her and other attorneys, she said.

All of the affected recruits were part of the Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest recruitment program, which has rotated more than 10,400 immigrants into the force with promises to quickly naturalize them in exchange for badly needed medical and language skills. It was [shuttered](#) in 2017 following security fears and increased background checks that paralyzed vetting resources within the government.

Chinese recruits filing for asylum are concerned that extensive background checks implemented in 2016 will deny them enlistment for [innocuous reasons](#), and some have waited so long that their visas have expired, [exposing them](#) to deportation. That has heightened concern they may be forced into the waiting arms of hostile governments.

“The Defense Department is coming up with any reason to fail them,” Stock said.

In another email to another Chinese recruit, an Army Reserve aviation unit at Fort Knox, Ky., received the list in Dec. 2017, among other documents related to enlistment, after it was forwarded among a chain of recruiting officials.

His name was also on the list. “I was shocked to receive the spreadsheet,” he wrote in an October asylum claim for himself. “I surmised that Army personnel didn’t bother to look at the Excel attachment before forwarding it.”

The lists also include the status of intelligence agency checks and background investigations that are similar to the scope of top-secret clearances.

Malinowski said recruits or their families could be imperiled if adversarial intelligence networks learned of their enlistments and detained them to probe their understanding of the enlistment process, security at U.S. installations “or anything that may be useful.”

While the list does not provide a country of origin, languages are listed using Defense Department linguistics codes, and program participants must be foreign-born. One list has circulated as early as July 2017, and variations of the list have included home addresses, obtained emails show.

Updated lists referred to in emails as late as January 2018 may contain more names.

Malinowski has [said](#) that other evidence of enlistment could be gathered by adversarial powers, such as social media posts and communication surveillance. But the spreadsheets can confirm enlistments and fill in any gaps they do not have, removing any speculation, he said.

The Defense Department had used caution to handle personal information of immigrant recruits, underscoring the need to safeguard their families in hostile nations, said Naomi Verdugo, a former senior recruiting official for the Army at the Pentagon.

Since 2009, when the MAVNI program began, officials would instruct Army public affairs staff to clear the use of photos, names and other details in media stories with immigrants who were particularly vulnerable.

“If you’re from Canada, it’s probably not an issue,” Verdugo said. “If you’re from Pakistan, it could be a problem.”

The practice was in place in 2015, when Verdugo left, she said, though it is unclear if Army or defense officials follow the same policies.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2019/03/06/hundreds-immigrant-recruits-risk-death-sentence-after-army-bungles-sensitive-data/>

The Justice Department has successfully argued in a lawsuit that identities and personal information of certain immigrant recruits should be protected. The recruits “have a right to privacy and may not wish to be identified,” a U.S. attorney wrote in an August filing.

The MAVNI program intended to harness skills in short supply among U.S.-born troops. But now, Malinowski said, Chinese recruits granted asylum may just be refugees instead of soldiers.

“Wouldn’t it have been better if we got the benefit of their intended service?” he asked.

# Lawmakers: High costs slowing action on contaminant in water

By Ellen Knickmeyer

The Associated Press, March 6, 2019



*Rep. Harley Rouda, D-Calif., speaks during a House Oversight and Reform subcommittee hearing on PFAS chemicals and their risks on Wednesday, March 6, 2019, on Capitol Hill in Washington. (AP Photo/Sait Serkan Gurbuz)*

WASHINGTON (AP) — Cleaning up and protecting U.S. drinking water from a class of toxic chemicals used in many household items could cost in the tens of billions of dollars nationally, including \$2 billion for the Department of Defense alone, witnesses testified

Wednesday before a House panel urging the federal government to move more quickly on the cleanup.

Rep. Harley Rouda, the California Democrat chairing the House Oversight and Reform environment subcommittee, told reporters after the hearing “it’s clear” the high costs were slowing any federal efforts to regulate and clean up the toxic chemicals, which are found in a range of goods, including nonstick pans, stain-resistant clothing, dental floss and food containers. They also are in firefighting foam used by the military to battle jet-fuel fires.

The compounds, called perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, have been used for decades. Water sampling shows the contaminant — also called the “forever chemicals” because they will take thousands of years to break down — has seeped into many public water systems in the United States and globally, including around military bases and industries.

Environmental Protection Agency chief Andrew Wheeler told reporters Tuesday that the agency was moving toward establishing federal limits for some kinds of the contaminant in drinking water. States and local communities say they need a mandatory EPA limit to start full-scale cleanup and protections against the compounds.

“There’s no indication of when the process might actually be complete,” Rouda told EPA and Defense Department officials testifying before the panel. In the meantime, military officials “are passing the buck to the EPA” rather than conducting a national cleanup of bases that have high levels of PFAS contamination, he said.

Democratic Rep. Dan Kildee of Michigan said veterans and families are increasingly fearful of PFAS contamination around bases. “The Defense Department in particular has so far failed to act with the required urgency to address this growing problem,” he said.

The Trump administration has been under increasing pressure to start regulating the toxic class of compounds since last year, when a draft federal toxicology report found some kinds of the widely used chemicals were harmful at levels much lower than the federal government’s current advisory level. The federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry cited studies linking PFAS contamination to liver problems, low birth weight, some cancers and other health issues.

Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, a Pennsylvania Republican and co-chairman of a congressional PFAS task force, called the forever compound “one of the most widespread public health crises” that the U.S. faces.

<https://www.apnews.com/951c6a5718ea469185d5e82cb90d48e9>

But Fitzpatrick cautioned against setting any PFAS limits too low, saying it would cost tens of billions of dollars to bring water systems into compliance.

David Ross, assistant administrator of the EPA's water office, defended the agency's decision to continue researching the compounds ahead of any formal regulatory moves.

"The science to fully understand these chemicals ... is not yet as robust as it needs to be," Ross said. He said resolving PFAS contamination was a national priority for the agency.

Communities and states say the EPA has done little concrete to start tackling the problem. In a tweet Wednesday, Mayor Rob Allen of Hoosick Falls, New York, where industrial releases are blamed for dangerously high PFAS levels in water, evoked the compound's nickname in saying "it will take 'forever' for EPA to act on its responsibility to regulate them."

The Defense Department has identified 401 military sites where PFAS was used, and found 24 U.S. military drinking-water systems around the world with PFAS levels above the current U.S. advisory level, Maureen Sullivan, the deputy assistant secretary of defense, told lawmakers.

U.S. military officials at those bases were providing bottled water or other alternate water supplies, Sullivan said.

Cleaning up bases contaminated by two of the best-studied versions of PFAS would cost about \$2 billion, she said.

Kildee, whose state of Michigan has been one of the most active in testing for PFAS and tackling contamination, said the Pentagon had yet to request the money for that cleanup.

Some states and local communities hosting military bases accuse the military of using the lack of any mandatory federal limit for PFAS in drinking water as a reason to deny Pentagon responsibility for cleanup.

New Mexico sued the Air Force on Tuesday over PFAS contamination around two bases in that state.

Sullivan said the Pentagon currently is discouraging the use of firefighting foam containing PFAS in training exercises on military bases. The Defense Department has yet to find a commercially available foam without PFAS that's effective enough in fighting aircraft fires, however, Sullivan said.

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**SEE ALSO:**

[Lawmakers to DoD: You knew about water contamination. Why haven't you done more?](#) [*Military Times*, 2019-03-06]

[New Mexico sues US Air Force over groundwater contamination](#) [*The Associated Press*, 2019-03-05]

[16 cancer cases in one family: Base water contamination fight moves to Congress](#) [*Military Times*, 2019-03-04]



# The new plan to prevent veteran suicides: new grants, better research, more community focus

By Leo Shane III

Military Times, March 5, 2019



*The Veteran's Crisis Line — available to veterans, troops and their families — operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. (Zachary Hada/Air Force)*

WASHINGTON — The White House is creating a new high-level task force on [preventing veterans suicide](#) which will include new community outreach grants aimed at former service members and expanded projects across a host of government agencies to coordinate research and prevention efforts.

President Donald Trump will sign a new executive order on the initiative — dubbed the President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide, or PREVENTS — on Tuesday afternoon at the White House.

It's the latest in a series of steps by his administration to address the problem, which claims [an estimated 20 veterans lives every day](#). Last year, the president signed a separate executive order providing more counseling and [mental health care](#) for recently separated service members, who face a significantly higher risk of suicide than other military groups.

According to senior administration officials, the new order will give agency officials a year to develop plans for a more aggressive approach to suicide prevention, with a goal of more state and local community engagement.

The task force will look to develop a new grant system for mental health support and outreach similar to the Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing program, which provides funding directly to local charities and city programs to help individualize assistance plans for veterans.

Those HUD-VASH vouchers have been in use for a decade and are widely credited with helping draw down the number of homeless veterans by half. Officials hope to replicate that model for suicide prevention, relying on local expertise and federal funding to reach more veterans.

Veterans Affairs officials estimate that of the 20 veterans a day who take their own lives, about 70 percent have little or no contact with the federal veteran system. That makes targeted community outreach to populations outside those systems critical to addressing the suicide problem.

The White House has not put a price tag on the new grants yet, but is expected to work with Congress in coming months to set parameters and draft legislation on the idea.

Meanwhile, the new task force will be charged with better coordinating existing research on suicide within federal systems. Already, the departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security have a host of information on traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder and mental health issues that could be indicators of suicidal thoughts.

Officials hope to use the Department of Energy's expansive data collection and research systems to better analyze that existing data, providing new potential avenues for prevention efforts.

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2019/03/05/the-new-plan-to-prevent-veteran-suicides-new-grants-better-research-more-community-focus/>

The research work will also include pushing the Centers for Disease Control to provide more up-to-date information on veterans suicide research. Currently, the latest available data on the problem typically trails at least two years behind current efforts. Senior administration officials are hoping to cut that wait down to no more than six months.

Suicide prevention has been a major focus of both Congress and the executive branch in recent years, but the rate of suicide has largely remained flat. White House officials are hoping the new task force will restart a national conversation on the issue, and bring in private-sector partners to help find new solutions.

Officials from the House Veterans' Affairs Committee are scheduled to hold a roundtable with administration experts on the issue later this week. Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee ranking member Jon Tester, D-Mont., introduced new legislation on the issue last week.

In December, the Veterans Health Administration announced a new pilot program with the advocacy group The Independence Fund to reunite combat troops for group therapy sessions, in the hopes of using those common bonds to provide better mental health resources.

Sarah Verardo, chief executive officer of the group, called the new White House initiative an important step forward in helping veterans.

"We owe it to them to ensure they are not forgotten upon their return home," she said. "They may have returned from the battlefield, but their war is not over. For many, their true battle begins when their purpose in the military ends."

Veterans facing any type of mental or emotional distress can contact the Veteran Crisis Line at any time by dialing 1-800-273-8255 and selecting option 1 for a VA staffer. Veterans, troops or their families members can also text 838255 or visit [VeteransCrisisLine.net](http://VeteransCrisisLine.net) for assistance.

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**SEE ALSO:**

[Trump Signs Executive Order Creating Task Force to Stop Vet Suicide](#) [*Military.com*, 2019-03-05]

## Senator: Involve DOJ in Military Housing Scandal

By Patricia Kime

Military.com, March 7, 2019



*Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., speaks to media during a break in a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington, Thursday, Sept. 27, 2018, with Christine Blasey Ford and Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh. (AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster)*

The U.S. armed services should consult with the U.S. Department of Justice regarding the conduct of private companies hired to manage military housing, Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Connecticut, said Thursday.

During a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on military oversight of base housing, Blumenthal said the services should weigh their legal options for bringing charges -- criminal or civil -- against the private contractors for failing to meet contractual obligations to their tenants.

The contractors, he said, provided substandard, unhealthy and inadequate housing and ignored pleas to repair or service the homes.

In the past two years, multiple news reports have surfaced citing squalid conditions at military houses -- from faulty wiring and exposed plumbing to poor water quality, vermin infestations, mold and lead contamination.

Last year, Reuters published [extensive reports](#) on lead contamination in Army housing, and mold and substandard conditions in Air Force [housing](#).

And in February, [a survey of more than 14,500 residents](#) of base housing found that 56 percent said they had "negative or very negative experiences" with their houses on military installations.

Blumenthal said one of his constituents, who lived at Naval Submarine Base New London, Connecticut, reported mold in their bathroom but were told they just needed to clean it up. Instead, the mold returned and a baby who lived in the home developed pneumonia and later had a stroke.

"What's happening here is criminal. It may not be criminal in some sense ... I'd leave that to the Justice Department. But I respectfully recommend that each of the services ask Justice to be involved, to do an intensive review as to whether there needs to be a criminal investigation or a civil investigation. That's the enforcement these landlords understand."

Military family members present at the hearing applauded Blumenthal's suggestion. Sarah Kline, who lived at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, in home infested with mold and cockroaches, said she supports DOJ involvement.

"That's where I want to see this go. I've had contractors in my house doing shoddy work. I've called the housing office to let them know what was going on and nothing happens," Kline said.

Army, Navy and Air Force officials currently are conducting inspections of 100 percent of their military housing stock in response to the scandal. The Marine Corps is calling individuals to ask if they can inspect the homes, Commandant Gen. Robert Neller said, and will send an inspector if invited to do so.

The services also are also finalizing a tenant bill of rights to give more leverage against the housing management companies, including a pathway for withholding their rent payments if their issues aren't fixed.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/03/07/senator-involve-doj-military-housing-scandal.html>

And they plan to increase staff at the garrison commands to conduct tighter oversight of the companies, as well as "reeducate" commanders on their responsibilities regarding base housing, service officials told the senators.

But whether the cases will end up in court remains to be seen. Army Secretary Mark Esper said his service plans to pursue allegations of fraud and "hold people accountable." Navy Secretary Richard Spencer said audits of the housing programs are underway and if issues are found, the service may consider consulting DOJ. Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson said that her service would consult its Office of Special Investigations.

But the latter two answers didn't satisfy Blumenthal.

"Let me point out that the processes for audit and internal investigations take a lot of time. This procedure ought to be expedited. If you care about this issue, let's recognize it for what it is. This problem hasn't just arisen. If it were new and novel, maybe following the normal audit process would make sense," he said.

Among the other concerns raised by senators was the relationship between base housing offices and the private management companies. The services said that they plan to strengthen the power of the housing offices and increase staffing at the federal offices.

But in many cases, the housing office and the contract management firms are collocated in the same buildings, where they spend each day side-by-side. The situation, Sen. Martha McSally, R-Arizona, said, makes the two parties appear to be "in cahoots."

"They are not [the military families'] advocates, according to the families. Can I get an Amen?" she said.

"Amen," shouted the families in the audience.

The service secretaries said they will strengthen the commanders' roles in overseeing housing offices and renegotiate contracts with the companies, with support of Congress.

They also promised that troops and their families should see results from the ongoing investigations and repairs within 90 days.

"The Army has to get back in the housing business," Esper said.

Air Force Chief of Staff David Goldfein said he has lived in base housing for more than 50 years, including his childhood, and he wanted airmen to have safe communities where they don't have to worry about their children's health or about retaliation if they complain about the condition of their housing.

"We are going to have to put our boot on the throat of these contractors," Goldfein said.

--Patricia Kime can be reached at [Patricia.Kime@military.com](mailto:Patricia.Kime@military.com). Follow her on Twitter at @patriciakime.

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**SEE ALSO:**

[Military should pursue legal action against privatized housing companies, senators say](#) [*Military Times*, 2019-03-07]

[Is it time to end privatized military housing?](#) [*Military Times*, 2019-03-07]

[Army suspends utility billing in privatized housing](#) [*Military Times*, 2019-03-07]

[Service secretaries: Tenant bill of rights will 'protect and empower' residents of privatized housing](#) [*Military Times*, 2019-03-07]

[Military unveils plan to help service members with base housing issues](#) [*Federal News Network*, 2019-03-07]

# The US Army is preparing for major changes to force structure

By Jen Judson

Defense News, March 6, 2019



*U.S. Soldiers assigned to the 1st Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, conduct training with an M1A2 Abrams tank during Combined Resolve X Live Fire Exercise at Grafenwoehr, Germany, April 19, 2018. The Joint Warfighting Assessment (JWA) helps the Army evaluate emerging concepts, integrate new technologies, and promote interoperability within the Army, with other services, U.S. allies, and other coalition partners. JWA helped to evaluate some of the*

*early concepts emerging as part of Multidomain Operations doctrine (Photo by Spc. Genesis Gomez/U.S. Army)*

WASHINGTON — The Army is preparing to make what it deems as necessary, and major, organizational changes to its force structure within the next five years, according to the [Futures and Concepts Center director](#).

“There is going to be a fundamental change in the organizational structure to fight the way we are describing,” Lt. Gen. Eric Wesley told an audience at the Center for a New American Security in Washington on March 4.

“The Army has relied on counterinsurgency operations over the past 15 years that depended greatly on the Brigade Combat Team. But now, with a new focus on large-scale ground combat operations anticipated in the future operating environment, “that will require echelons above brigade, all of which will solve unique and distinct problems that a given BCT can’t solve by itself,” Wesley said.

A new organizational structure is necessary, according to Wesley, to align better with the service’s new warfighting doctrine under development — Multidomain Operations or MDO.

The Army rolled out the first iteration of its new doctrine over a year ago and debuted a revised version — MDO 1.5 — shortly after the Association of the U.S. Army’s annual convention in Washington last fall.

The new doctrine addresses how the service plans to operate in the future against adversaries that have learned to engage in provocative behavior in a gray zone that doesn’t quite classify as conflict, and who have gone to school on U.S. capabilities, developing equipment and operating concepts that threaten the U.S.’s long-standing capability overmatch.

The Army is now focused on ensuring that its capabilities match its new doctrine, standing up a new four-star command [in Austin, Texas](#) — [Army Futures Command](#) — to accomplish such a goal and syncing its other major commands together to focus on six top modernization priorities.

Wesley noted that the organizational realignment needed would “probably be even a bigger problem than the materiel requirements” to create a force designed for multidomain operations.

“You will see us seek to build out echelons above brigade — the Division, the Corps, even potentially a field Army — to get into theater that can manage these theater problems that otherwise wouldn’t be achieved,” he added.

<https://www.defensenews.com/land/2019/03/06/major-army-force-structure-changes-afoot/>

The Army will likely have to make trades across the active and reserve forces, Wesley said, “so we have the ability to have a force posture that can rapidly transition if necessary.”

But with all of these other dramatic changes, it’s inevitable that the force structure change with it, according to Wesley, and that is going to have to happen sooner rather than later, he stressed.

The Army has to “dive in” and start putting plans in place in the next five-year budgeting cycle “because if you want to achieve what the secretary and the chief has said, to be an MDO capable force by 2028, you have to start doing some of these organizational changes early,” Wesley told a group of reporters following the event at CNAS.

And organizational changes need to align with the service’s plans to field first units with newly modernized equipment and in some cases, units are slated to receive this equipment in very short order, according to Wesley.

“You need some place for that stuff to land,” he said. “When you talk about long-range precision fires, for example, having an appropriate theater fires command. When you talk about air-and-missile defense and first unit equipped, what kind of force structure do we have to enable that? And it can’t just be at the brigade level ... It has to transcend echelons.”

Wesley said while he couldn’t discuss specifics yet, he believed evidence of major organizational changes will likely be seen toward the end of the next five-year budget period.

The three-star also said he believed the Army would need to increase the level of units stationed abroad.

“The National Defense Strategy talks about the contact and blunt forces,” Wesley said. “Contact are those that are in theater all the time — either rotational or permanent — and blunt [forces] are those that can rapidly move into theater as necessary.”

Getting the right mix between contact and blunt forces will be necessary, Wesley said.

“You have to have contact forces. What we are working on is how to optimize what that balance is. You have to have headquarters and fires commands and that can be a deterrent effect immediately.”

Over the next few years, the Army plans to war-game the right mix, but “regardless, I think you are going to find that at some point there will have to be a debate on the degree to which we have forward presence, potentially increased, in the future,” Wesley said.

# U.S. deaths from alcohol, drugs and suicide hit highest level since record-keeping began

By Jayne O'Donnell

USA TODAY, March 5, 2019



*Kimberly McDonald of Richmond, Wisc. is shown with her father Gerry Middag on her wedding day in 2003. Middag died by suicide in 2010 while suffering from Parkinson's disease and after he was also diagnosed with Lewy body dementia. (Photo: Family photo)*

The number of deaths from [alcohol](#), drugs and [suicide](#) in 2017 hit the highest level since federal data collection started in 1999, according to an analysis of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data by two public health nonprofits.

The national rate for deaths from alcohol, drugs and suicide rose from 43.9 to 46.6 deaths per 100,000 people in 2017, a 6 percent increase, the Trust for America's Health and the Well Being Trust reported Tuesday. That was a slower increase than in the previous two years, but it was greater than the 4 percent average annual increase since 1999.

Deaths from [suicides](#) rose from 13.9 to 14.5 deaths per 100,000, a 4 percent increase. That was double the average annual pace over the previous decade.

Suicide by suffocation increased 42 percent from 2008 to 2017. Suicide by firearm increased 22 percent in that time.

Psychologist Benjamin Miller, chief strategy officer of the Well Being Trust, says broader efforts are needed to address the underlying causes of alcohol and drug use and suicide.

"It's almost a joke how simple we're trying to make these issues," he says. "We're not changing direction, and it's getting worse."

The health and well-being trusts propose approaches including:

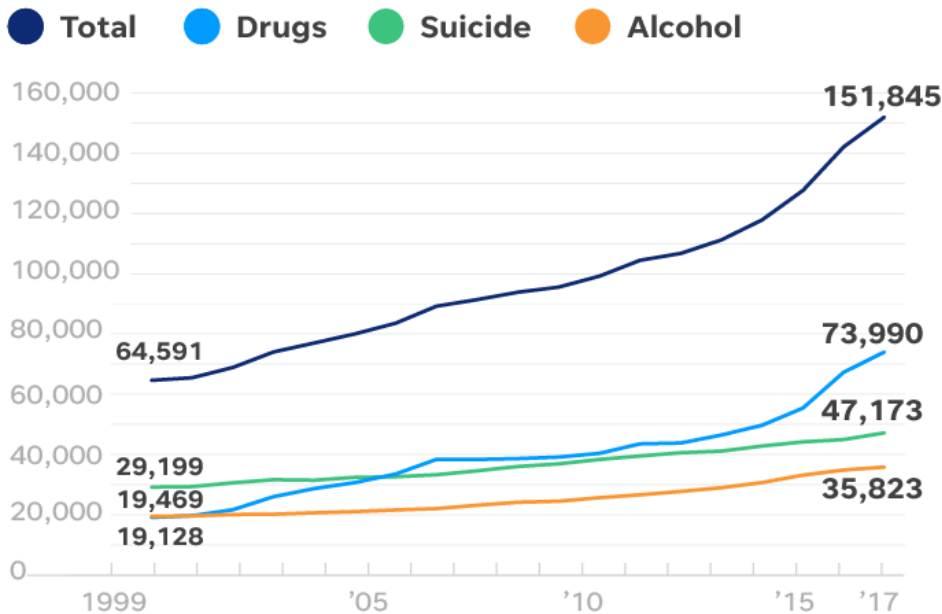
- ▶ More funding and support for programs that reduce risk factors and promote resilience in children, families and communities. Trauma and [adverse childhood experiences](#) such as incarcerated parents or exposure to domestic violence increase the risk of drug and alcohol abuse and suicide.
- ▶ Policies that limit people's access to the means of suicide, such as the safe storage of medications and firearms, and responsible opioid prescribing practices.
- ▶ More resources for programs that reduce the risk of addiction and overdose, especially in areas and among people most affected, and equal access to such services.

While overdose antidotes and treatment for opioid use disorder are needed, Miller says, "it's not going to fix" the underlying problems that lead people to end their lives, whether or not it's intentional.

In most states, deaths from alcohol, drugs and suicides increased in 2017. In five – Massachusetts, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Utah and Wyoming – those deaths fell.

Deaths from synthetic opioids, including the narcotic pain reliever fentanyl, rose 45 percent. Such deaths have increased tenfold in the past five years.

## Annual deaths from alcohol, drugs, and suicide in the US:



SOURCE Trust for America's Health and the Well Being Trust.  
Analysis of data from National Center For Health Statistics, CDC ; USA TODAY

Loribeth Bowman Stein says the lack of social connection fuels hopelessness: "We don't really see each other anymore."

"We don't share our hopes and joys in the same way, and we aren't as available to one another, physically and emotionally, as we need to be," says Stein, of Milford, Connecticut. "The world got smaller, but lonelier."

Miller agrees. When people feel a "lack of belonging," he says, "they seek meaning in other places."

That can lead them to withdraw into addiction. The new report emphasizes what

should be done differently.

Kimberly McDonald is a licensed clinical social worker who has worked in a hospital, for county government and in private practice. She lost her father to suicide in 2010.

"We are a society that criticizes and lacks compassion, integrity, and empathy," the Richmond, Wisconsin, woman says. "I work daily with individuals who each have their own demons."

McDonald's father took his own life after diagnoses of Lewy body dementia and Parkinson's disease.

"He knew the trajectory of where the disease would take him," she says.

John Auerbach, the former Massachusetts state health secretary who heads Trust for America's Health, says the country needs to better understand and address what drives "these devastating deaths of despair."

*If you are interested in connecting with people online who have overcome or are struggling with issues mentioned in this story, join [USA TODAY's "I Survived It" Facebook support group](#).*



# Why Big Navy wants to do more to retain sailors

By Mark D. Faram

Navy Times, March 4, 2019



*Naval Support Activity Panama City commanding officer Cmdr. Jay Segó discharges Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Taylor Baxley from the active duty prior to reenlisting him for an additional six years. Baxley is the command's 2018 Sailor of the Year and will transfer to the guided-missile cruiser Vicksburg. The Navy wants to keep reenlisting its best and brightest sailors while growing the fleet.*

(Edward Buczek/Navy)

Last year, the Navy retained 78 percent of its reenlistment-eligible sailors in uniform, the best retention rate in more than a decade — but the sea service's top uniformed personnel officer say that's not good enough.

So [Vice Adm. Bob Burke](#), the Navy's [outgoing chief of personnel](#), has his recruiters out scouring America for new enlistees and has raised the retention goals for commands nationwide, urging them to become more creative about keeping sailors for another tour.

Testifying before the [Senate Armed Services Committee's](#) Personnel Subcommittee on Feb. 27, Burke told lawmakers that the Navy will grow by 7,500 personnel this year and another 5,100 next year — an “aggressive pace,” as he put it — but they “still have work to do” and warned that the service can't make its goals without “consistent and full funding.”

By the end of September, the Navy's end strength should total around 335,500 sailors. Next year's numbers will put the Navy at roughly 340,500 uniformed personnel.

Current long-term budget projections project the Navy topping out at around 344,800 officers and sailors at the end of Fiscal Year 2023, the largest tally of personnel since early 2007 and 17,400 more than were in the service at the beginning of this fiscal year.

While the Navy continues to grow the force, it must battle manning gaps at sea that currently stand at roughly 6,200 billets.

“Retention of every capable sailor remains a vital element of our growth strategy,” Burke stressed in prepared written remarks to lawmakers. A fairly steep growth trajectory imposes some challenges for all ratings and skills.”

The Navy succeeded last year because of the “surgical use of retention bonuses” and “predictive analytics and other policy levers” to target the sailors they needed keep, resulting in “largest enlisted retention improvements in a decade,” he wrote.

But Burke warned that the Navy must hurdle traditional challenges in finding and retaining personnel in several critical ratings and communities, including nuclear power, special warfare, advanced electronics, aviation maintenance and information technology.

He told senators that “incentives remain an integral part of our retention strategy” including a pilot bonus program launched in December that adds a “merit-based” kicker “to enlisted retention bonuses.”

He told the fleet that commands must shift out of their antiquated notions lodged in the days of the draw down and start working harder to retain eligible sailors.

“With unemployment at the lowest levels since 1969 and wage growth increasing, we must recognize that our sailors have options in the strong civilian job market,” Burke wrote in [a Jan. 19 NavAdmin message](#).

<https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2019/03/04/why-big-navy-wants-to-do-more-to-retain-sailors/>

"I challenge each of you to lean forward and do your part to achieve maximum fleet readiness through increased retention and reduced attrition."

For retention, the Navy leans on three separate "zones" which define key spans of a sailor's enlisted service.

Last year, the Navy retained 68 percent of eligible sailors in Zone A — those with up to six years in uniform — nearly doubling the service's 35 percent goal.

This year, Burke set the goal at 55 percent.

Last year, the Navy retained 75 percent of eligible sailors in Zone B — those who have accrued between six and 10 years of service. That was nearly 20 points higher than the 54 percent goal.

But Burke set next year's goal at 65 percent.

Last year, Burke set the retention goal of 64 percent for Zone C — past the 10-year mark but no more than 14 years of service — at 64 percent.

The Navy kept 80 percent. So Burke set the new goal at 89 percent.

Burke told senators that these retention gains were "critical" because they "allowed us to establish a deep bench of experienced journeymen needed to develop that next generation of masters."

On the other end of the retention spectrum, Burke said that the Navy must redouble efforts to reduce attrition, the number of sailors who fail to finish their enlistments.

Last year, Zone A sailors recorded a 6 percent rate of attrition.

To fix that, in his directive Burke urged commanders to concentrate on the fundamentals of good leadership, including engaging sailors from the moment they report to a unit, mentoring them during their first term of service and using career development programs to ensure that no one goes home early.

# Why Trump is trying to help sailors become merchant mariners

By Mark D. Faram

Navy Times, March 4, 2019



*The MV Cape Ray, a civilian-operated ship owned by the Maritime Administration, returns to its homeport of Portsmouth, Va., on Sept. 17, 2014, after assisting in efforts to rid Syria of chemical weapons. (Mark D. Faram/Staff)*

It probably shouldn't have taken an executive order from the president to let experienced service members get merchant marine credentials, but that's what finally happened on Monday.

By signing an executive order entitled "Supporting the Transition of Active Duty Service Members and Military Veterans into the Merchant Marine," President Donald Trump indicated that helping veterans land good blue collar jobs at sea will strengthen national security, too.

Trump's declaration is designed to allow Navy, Coast Guard and [Army Watercraft Systems](#) personnel leaving active duty to apply their training and experience to land future careers in the maritime industry.

"It makes it easier for sea service veterans to get high-paying, high-skilled jobs as mariners by waiving government-issued licensing fees and by crediting military training in the [National Maritime Center](#) credentialing system," said Peter Navarro, the director of the Office of Trade and Manufacturing Policy, during a conference call with reporters on Monday.

A direct White House adviser to Trump, Navarro said that the executive order makes it easier for enlisted sailors and officers to qualify as "mates and engineers" under the [Coast Guard's civilian mariner licensing rule](#).

Previously, sailors and other service members had to start over by enrolling in basic maritime classes, often paying \$25,000 to meet the requirements.

Trump's executive order should allow service members on active duty to simultaneously earn qualifications at sea while also netting equivalent civilian licenses along the way, Navarro said.

Those who already separated also could be fast-tracked to getting licensed, but Navarro said more work must be done there.

Before all of this becomes a reality, the Navy first must work with the Coast Guard to get schools, qualifications and experiences certified for civilian licensing.

The Army's already done this for their active-duty mariners, said retired Navy Rear Adm. Mark H. "Buz" Buzby, the [Maritime Administrator](#).

"I think this is a huge step in the right direction and something the nation critically needs," Buzby told Navy Times by telephone.

A graduate of the [Merchant Marine Academy](#) and career naval officer. Before joining the U.S. Department of Transportation Buzby led Military Sealift Command, the government's largest employer of civilian mariners.

<https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2019/03/04/why-trump-is-trying-to-help-sailors-become-merchant-mariners/>

Their supply ships replenish the Navy’s fleet at sea and would be called upon [to ferry materiel to Marines and soldiers](#) fighting overseas in a ground war.

And they depend on qualified merchant mariners, which is why Trump’s executive order is important to national security, too.

On April 24, Buzby warned senators that an outbreak of war likely would find the nation with a "[shortfall of 1,800 qualified mariners](#) in the event of a full, prolonged mobilization” — and that’s assuming a best case scenario, with no losses of ships or personnel.

Only weeks earlier, [he warned House lawmakers](#) that dwindling numbers of commercial vessels and qualified crew members to man them might make the “surge” of sealift necessary to support operations difficult.

“Because of the historically low number of ships in the U.S.-flag, oceangoing fleet over the past several years, I am concerned about the availability of a sufficient number of qualified mariners with the necessary endorsements to operate large ships (unlimited horsepower and unlimited tonnage) and to sustain a prolonged sealift mobilization beyond the first four to six months,” Buzby said.

“Historically, the men and women of the merchant marine have always stood up in times of need to meet any task set for them and would likely extend their time at sea beyond normal tours if called upon to do so. However, it is critical to ensure we have enough qualified U.S. mariners to safely crew our government vessels so that the readiness of the force is not negatively impacted.”

What’s good for national security also is good for American workers, Navarro added during his round table with reporters.

He pointed to the average annual wages paid to water transportation workers — \$65,720 per year, which is well above the national occupational average of \$50,620 — and members of the U.S. Merchant Marine routinely earn even more.

“So this is a great opportunity for sea veterans to seamlessly transition into really good, high-paying jobs that will help our national security front,” Navarro said.

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**SEE ALSO:**

[Executive Order Aims to Attract Transitioning Troops to the Merchant Marine](#) [*Military.com*, 2019-03-04]

# Misconduct

# Feds: U.S. Marine veteran built cocaine pipeline as Mexican drug kingpin

By Kristina Davis

The San Diego Union-Tribune, February 26, 2019

A U.S. Marine veteran who rose to power as a reputed Mexican drug kingpin has been named in a massive cocaine trafficking indictment in San Diego.

The investigation into Angel Dominguez Ramirez Jr.'s organization revealed "an unprecedented level of corruption within the Mexican government, local police departments, federal police agencies and military," the U.S. Attorney's Office said in a recent court filing.

More than 41 people have been charged in the case, which has yielded 5,000 kilograms of seized cocaine and more than \$9 million in drug proceeds.

Dominguez's organization sourced cocaine from Peru, Venezuela, Ecuador, up through Central America and into Chiapas, Mexico, according to prosecutors. Transportation cells would move the cocaine into Mexico using boats, aircraft and commercial vehicles, then through the California and Texas borders for distribution into the United States, according to the court filing.

The organization also used a reverse pipeline moving drug proceeds from the U.S. back south, according to the indictment that was partially unsealed this week.

Dominguez was arrested in Mexico in 2016 and is awaiting extradition to San Diego.

He is a dual U.S. citizen who served as a Marine, prosecutors said. According to his U.S. passport application, he walks with a limp due to a combat-related injury.

He is accused of using his military training as an original member of the [Los Zetas](#) paramilitary cartel, which was first formed as an enforcement wing for the Cartel del Golfo. He was known as "Zeta 39," prosecutors said, no doubt informing the name of his current organization, "El Seguimiento 39."

Prosecutors say he built his organization through cooperative alliances with the Beltran Leyva Organization, the Cartel de Jalisco Nueva Generacion, the Sinaloa Cartel, the Cartel del Golfo and the Los Zetas.

He also called upon corrupt government officials, authorities said.

Those corrupt relationships were on full display in 2017, when Ivan Reyes Arzate was taken down in Chicago.

Reyes was a top federal police commander and the highest-ranking member of Mexico's Sensitive Investigation Unit. He served as a liaison with U.S. law enforcement officials, privy to sensitive information about some of the most important U.S. investigations into drug cartels.

Turns out, Reyes was leaking the information to the cartels.

The first hint came when the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration in Chicago asked Reyes' unit to conduct surveillance of a meeting of traffickers in Cancun. Wiretapped communications then revealed that someone named "Ayala" — later determined to be Reyes — warned one of the traffickers about the investigation and suggested he lay low.

"You were the target," Reyes warned.

<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/courts/sd-me-dominguez-indictment-20190226-story.html>  
Scrutiny turned to Reyes as the mole when U.S. agents intercepted a call between Dominguez and another trafficker.

“Who is Ivan?” Dominguez asked, according to prosecutors.

“The boss,” the other trafficker said.

Dominguez began to rely heavily on Reyes for information about the overlapping San Diego-Chicago DEA investigation.

At one point, Reyes admitted to meeting with Dominguez in Mexico City. Dominguez had proposed a plan: that he supply the federal police with incriminating information against the current plaza bosses in the Gulf state of Tamaulipas, Mexico. Once they were arrested, Dominguez could replace them with less violent bosses.

Reyes’ leak in the investigation prompted one confidential DEA informant — who had been paid more than \$1 million for cooperating — to be evacuated from Mexico for safety.

Years earlier, when Reyes had worked for the Beltran Leyva cartel, he revealed another cooperator’s identity, resulting in the cooperator’s torture and death at the hands of cartel assassins, authorities said.

Dominguez and another unnamed co-conspirator knew of Reyes’ prior relationship with the Beltran Leyva group and threatened to use it as leverage against the official if they needed to, according to intercepted communications.

Reyes turned himself in to authorities in Chicago in February 2017 and in November was sentenced to 40 months in prison.

As for the Dominguez prosecution, several co-defendants have been already been arrested — beginning in July 2017 — and many have pleaded guilty.

The complaint against Reyes in Chicago had acknowledged that an indictment had been filed against Dominguez in San Diego, but noted it was sealed. On Monday, his name was finally unsealed along with the names of eight others. The names of more than 25 people charged in the case remain sealed.

# Hazing charges against three Air Force Academy swimmers dismissed

By Ellie Mulder

The Gazette (Colorado Springs, Colo.), March 7, 2019



*Cadets Michael Hannigan and Lars Knutson*

Pending court-martial charges against three members of the Air Force Academy's men's swim team have been dismissed, the academy announced Wednesday.

Cadets Michael Hannigan, Lars Knutson and Garrett Glaudini were accused of hazing, conspiracy and obstruction of justice.

Although the criminal charges were dismissed, "a number of cases, including these three, remain under consideration for possible administrative action," the academy said in a news release.

The allegations against Hannigan, the captain of the swimming team, and Knutson, a top swimmer who was named a first-team all Western Athletic Conference swimmer last year, were announced by the academy in September. The charges were without precedent in the school's 64-year history, with two seniors facing up to five years behind bars on allegations of obstruction of justice and dereliction of duty. In the past, hazing cases have been handled through the school's administrative discipline process, making this the first criminal hazing case in academy history.

They were two of 11 swimmers who were suspended from the team in February 2018 amid an investigation into hazing.

The allegations against Glaudini were not publicly released before Wednesday.

Freshmen had complained about a hazing ritual that included eating to the point of sickness and a rite that involved naked upperclassmen and threatened — but phony — demands for oral sex.

The charges against Hannigan, Knutson and Glaudini "were considered individually after an extensive investigation and with input from the chain of command and legal counsel," the release says. "In the months since the preferral of charges, numerous interviews were conducted in preparation for the trial proceedings.

"As a result of those interviews as well as information provided in response to related discipline actions, the convening authorities determined that a felony conviction (and all of the consequences of such a conviction) would not be the appropriate outcome for their conduct."

Other cadets "involved in these incidents" already have faced disciplinary action, including administrative paperwork, probation and disenrollment, the release says.

"Although the court-martial charges have been dismissed, acts of hazing and bullying have no place in our military as they run contrary to the core concept of dignity and respect," the release says.

A summary of the 900-page investigative file obtained by The Gazette showed the hazing took place on Sept. 29, 2017.



[https://gazette.com/news/hazing-charges-against-three-air-force-academy-swimmers-dismissed/article\\_353cb4d4-4066-11e9-9c17-abd08ddded8c.html](https://gazette.com/news/hazing-charges-against-three-air-force-academy-swimmers-dismissed/article_353cb4d4-4066-11e9-9c17-abd08ddded8c.html)

The swim team started the evening with a dinner for the freshmen class at Olive Garden. Over all-you-can-eat pasta, the newcomers were introduced to “Phi Kappa Sierra,” a self-described swimming team fraternity that has been in existence since at least the 1980s.

The bounty of food on the table was part of the initiation rites, the freshmen were told. As the food kept coming, the newcomers were instructed to eat as much as they could.

After the meal, the stuffed freshmen were waddled to a car and blindfolded with their blue cadet ties. They were driven to the woods north of the 18,500-acre campus for another ritual called the “chunker.”

Upperclassmen had gallons of milk for the cadets to drink and foods prepared for the event. Jello with mustard was one example.

The freshmen, who had just finished eight weeks of basic training, were made to run, drink milk, eat and run some more, sources told the Gazette. The goal of the chunker was to make them vomit, “spew chunks” in cadet lingo.

With that ritual completed, the final stage of the hazing allegedly began, with seniors stripping and freshmen being blindfolded again.

No sexual acts were alleged to have taken place. The unclothed seniors pulled their pants back up and announced it was all a gag. The incident prompted one of the freshmen to complain to top academy leaders.

That triggered the investigation, which lasted through most of the swimming team season.

It resulted in a dramatic scene in Houston on Feb. 22, when cadets were literally pulled from the pool at the Western Athletic Conference championships and suspended from the team, which was making a run at the conference crown.

Knutson and Hannigan were held back from graduation May 23.

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**SEE ALSO:**

[Air Force Academy dismisses hazing charges against 3 cadets](#) [*The Associated Press*, 2019-03-06]

# National Security Agency Travelers Misspent \$285,000, Watchdog Finds

By Charles S. Clark

Government Executive, March 4, 2019



By *luchunyu / Shutterstock.com*

As part of [transparency efforts](#) at one of the government's most secretive organizations, the National Security Agency's inspector general on Monday released an [unclassified version](#) of an audit of employee travel expenses that found a concerning number to be improper.

The agency "did not adequately monitor cardholder activities, which may have permitted improper cash advances and other misuse of individually billed travel cards," wrote the auditors led by IG Robert Storch, after a review of transactions over a nine-month period from January through September 2017.

The report described "ineffective management of a program that in fiscal year 2017 processed 43,579 claims totaling \$69.4 million dollars." NSA travel cardholders spent some \$900,000 on "questionable transactions, of which at least \$285,000 was determined by the OIG to be inappropriate," the report said. "Travel systems are outdated, repetitive and disparate," auditors wrote.

The watchdog referred an undisclosed number of the flagged transactions involving use of purchase cards for personal items to its Investigations Division, "which substantiated misuse and referred the employees involved to the agency for possible disciplinary action."

The report did not provide details on individual abuse of the system.

Specific problems, however, include the fact that NSA's centrally billed travel charge card account was not reconciled in a timely fashion, creating a balance owed of more than \$130,000," the report said. Also, the agency does not require travel charge card training for travelers, managers, or authorizing officials, and its travel management information systems "are in need of modernization."

Many of the lapses in closing accounts involved former agency military affiliates' travel charge cards. "Six former military affiliates who have subsequently become agency contractors and one military affiliate who was reassigned still have open travel charge card accounts," the report said.

Poor documentation means that the government ends up paying for travel that was planned but didn't take place. "Our testing found that in one year, the agency paid 13 of 76, or 17 percent, of individuals who traveled after flights were canceled a total of over \$12,000 based on the submission of itineraries that were not used," the IG found.

Another system issue is the allowing of employees to make purchases using third-parties, such as Amazon or PayPal. This practice circumvents any merchant category code blocking and disguises purchase descriptions, leading to a lack of control monitoring," the auditors wrote after reviewing made 162 such purchases totaling \$80,884, for such needs as lodging or conference attendance. The Government Travel Charge Card program office does not review or block these purchases and considers them "unavoidable."

The IG made 10 recommendations, including more centralized monitoring, more rapid reconciliation of accounts, modernized software and better training.

<https://www.govexec.com/management/2019/03/national-security-agency-travelers-misspent-285000-watchdog-finds/155275/>

The NSA managers are implementing all 10.

Storch said the report's release "marks a significant step in the OIG's effort to increase the transparency of its oversight work at this critically important federal agency."

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**SEE ALSO:**

[Lawmakers Look to Crack Down on Federal Employee Travel](#) [*Government Executive*, 2019-03-04]

# Norfolk-based sailor used military discount to buy guns and resell them—sometimes to criminals

By Scott Daugherty

The Virginian-Pilot, March 4, 2019



*Julio Pino (Western Tidewater Regional Jail)*

The Walter E. Hoffman United States Courthouse, seen at the corner of Granby Street and Brambleton Avenue in Norfolk.

Using his military discount, a Norfolk-based sailor bought and resold 23 firearms for profit, according to court documents.

Many of Petty Officer 3rd Class Julio Fernando Pino's customers? Criminals.

Pino, who was honorably discharged from the Navy in December, was sentenced Monday to 2½ years in prison. "The defendant bought and re-sold firearms so many times that, unsurprisingly, he sold some firearms to prohibited people, including a juvenile, a drug-addicted armed robber, a drug dealer trafficking in stolen firearms and many others," Assistant U.S. Attorney William B. Jackson said in court documents.

According to court documents, Pino's scheme stretched from Nov. 6, 2015 through January 21, 2017. Prosecutors said he illegally engaged in the business of dealing firearms without being a licensed dealer.

In all, Pino, now 26, purchased at least 60 firearms during that time before advertising them on [www.VAGuntrader.com](http://www.VAGuntrader.com) and [www.armslist.com](http://www.armslist.com).

Court documents outline one particular sale of a .40-caliber Glock Model 23, which he purchased March 12, 2016, from the Marine Corps Exchange in Norfolk. The original sale price was \$439.99.

In the process, he signed a Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives form in which he said he was the actual buyer and transferee of the weapon even though he had no plans to keep it, documents said.

Less than three hours after the purchase, a potential buyer responded to an advertisement for the weapon. Later that day, he sold it to the person for \$550, documents said.

Assistant Federal Public Defender Keith Kimball said his client tried to be careful about who he sold the firearms to, but obviously failed.

"Mr. Pino has no criminal history and did not seek to put guns in the hands of people who would use them to commit crimes," he said, lamenting how his client now realizes he exercised "extremely poor judgment."

Regarding a Dec. 16, 2015 gun sale in Maryland that involved a 16-year-old boy, Kimball said his client didn't know the buyer's age at the time.

Jackson countered that ATF agents told Pino not to buy firearms to immediately resell them and that he didn't listen.

"Despite repeated warnings by ATF agents, he continued to sell guns without a license, even after telling them that he would stop," Jackson said as he argued for a sentence of more than three years in prison.

Kimball asked the court to sentence his client to probation. He said Pino, who is married with an 18-month-old son, enlisted in December 2012 and was most recently stationed on the aircraft carrier George H.W. Bush.

"Mr. Pino had planned to make the Navy a career, but the instant offense ended his plan," Kimball said.

<https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2019/03/05/say-it-aint-so-cno-more-unlawful-command-influence-claims-dog-fitz-cases/>

# Say it ain't so, CNO! Do more unlawful command influence woes dog Fitz cases?

By Geoff Ziezulewicz

Navy Times, March 5, 2019



*The warship Fitzgerald is towed back to port following a fatal 2017 collision off the coast of Japan. (Navy)*

An [opinion piece](#) blaming the warship [Fitzgerald's 2017 collision](#) on the crew and commanding officer that was shared on [Big Navy's social media accounts](#) last month also went out in [Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson's](#) official newsletter.

The commentary by retired Navy officer Bryan McGrath was published on the War on the Rocks website on Feb. 8 and redistributed on official military channels. That became a hot issue in court, where two Fitz officers are on trial for their alleged roles in contributing to the accident that killed seven sailors.

Attorneys for [Cmdr. Bryce Benson](#), the skipper of the guided-missile destroyer when it collided with the commercial cargo vessel ACX Crystal off the coast of Japan, and [Lt. Natalie Combs](#) — the highest-ranking officer in warship's Combat Information Center — took aim at how the Navy brass used the sea service's official Facebook and Twitter accounts to paint unflattering portraits of their clients.

They contend that those official Navy messages are part of a larger problem of unlawful command influence, with the senior leaders of the sea service tainting the court-martial cases against Benson and Combs, who should be presumed innocent under the law.

The news roundup from the Navy's top officer — known as “CNOtes” — also shared the opinion piece on Feb. 8, according to a copy obtained by Navy Times.

McGrath's [“The Fitzgerald Collision: In Search of the Onus”](#) is the only item on that day's CNOtes that fails to directly link to Richardson's recent speeches, positions or activities.

“Leaders, CNOtes is a product designed to provide a roll-up of key CNO communication events and messages to increase awareness and promote alignment on relevant Navy topics,” a blurb at the top of Richardson's roundup reads.

But the person responsible for drafting CNOtes, Richardson's spokeswoman Lt. Cmdr. Jacqueline Pau, said her boss played no part in putting McGrath's piece into the newsletter.

“CNO does not review the product before it's released,” she said in an email to Navy Times.

The collection often includes “a few news articles meant to stimulate conversation” that's sent “to anyone who signs up for information about the CNO through Navy.mil,” she said.

About 20,000 accounts are subscribed to the newsletter, Pau said. They include retired officers, active-duty members and the media, among others.

“Anyone can sign up,” she said. “We also push to most PAOs to help answer the question, ‘What is CNO saying?’”

The McGrath piece was also included in the “notable commentary” section of a Pentagon news roundup on Feb. 9.

<https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2019/03/05/say-it-aint-so-cno-more-unlawful-command-influence-claims-dog-fitz-cases/>

Three military attorneys told Navy Times that including the opinion piece in a CNO-branded product could give more ammunition to lawyers arguing that superiors committed unlawful command influence against the defendants.

Dubbed the “mortal enemy of military justice” by higher courts, unlawful command influence, or UCI, occurs when superiors utter words or take actions that wrongfully influence the outcome of court-martial cases, jeopardize the appeals process or undermine the public’s confidence in the armed forces by appearing to tip the scales of justice.

Improper comments by military leaders might make it difficult for the accused to get a fair trial because potential panel members could be influenced if they know how their superiors feel about a case.

The Navy’s Twitter and Facebook posts of the opinion piece were cited last month in a motion by Combs’ attorneys to get her case dismissed due to what they contend are repeated UCI efforts by service leaders.

Navy Times reported last week that the Navy’s head spokesman, [Capt. Gregory Hicks](#), had directed the piece to be shared on Big Navy’s accounts.

“I see this as further fodder for an unlawful command influence motion,” [Patrick McLain](#), a retired Marine Corps judge now in private practice, said of the McGrath piece’s inclusion in CNOtes.

“It boggles the mind that the CNO’s staff could be so tone deaf, when they must know that UCI is an issue in this case.”

After reviewing a copy of the Feb. 8 CNOtes, McLain pointed out that the opinion piece was the only one of 14 items “that does not involve the CNO speaking or doing something, and the only item about legal/military justice matters.”

“Why would this be in CNOtes, other than to give the CNO’s view on culpability in the USS Fitzgerald collision case?” he said.

The other items in that edition of CNOtes “are clearly advocacy for the CNO’s position,” McLain said.

“Thus, it would seem natural to conclude that the inclusion of Bryan McGrath’s article is tacitly a statement of CNO’s position,” he said. “That is certainly consistent with the theme of CNOtes, which either boasts of the CNO’s actions or gives the CNO’s position on matters.”

Including the piece in a CNO product means it’s not just the author’s opinion anymore, added retired Navy Capt. Lawrence Brennan, an attorney who now teaches at Fordham University’s School of Law.

“It’s the imprimatur of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations,” Brennan said. “It’s in the CNO’s paper. Who’s the target for that? Some of them might be members of the court.”

As allegations of UCI mount, the controversy threatens to derail Navy efforts to punish potential wrongdoing, he warned.

“Why are we talking about the legal aspects as opposed to the substantive ship handling aspects?” Brennan said. “The record is so heavy with comments with the CNO blaming the captain and others on board ... maybe rightfully so, but not within the context of military justice.”

The judge in Benson’s case ruled in December that a stream of public statements by Navy leaders presented the appearance of UCI.

“The repeated statements from (Richardson) and (Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Bill Moran) about the accused’s specific case would cause an objective, disinterested observer, fully informed of all of the

<https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2019/03/05/say-it-aint-so-cno-more-unlawful-command-influence-claims-dog-fitz-cases/>

facts and circumstances, to harbor a significant doubt about the fairness of the proceeding,” judge Capt. Jonathan Stephens wrote in his December ruling.

And to Brennan, that makes the latest CNOtes headache that much more inexplicable.

“With all the problems that are here, you would expect that the CNO and the CNO’s drafter of CNOtes would use their judgment and say, hey, maybe this isn’t the right thing to say at this time,” Brennan said.

Zachary Spilman, a former Marine Corps attorney now in private practice, said that Benson and Combs’ defense teams could add this edition of CNOtes to their UCI arsenal.

“It seems to be that if the Navy wants to hold certain people criminally responsible for the Fitzgerald collision, then it needs to allow the criminal justice process to work to a conclusion and not treat the situation as a public relations issue,” he said.

## A SEAL and a Marine Raider seek plea deals in Green Beret murder case

By Todd South

Military Times, March 7, 2019

Two of the four special operators charged with murder in the strangulation death of a Green Beret staff sergeant are negotiating plea deals with government prosecutors.

The [Daily Beast](#) reported earlier this week that Navy SEAL Chief Petty Officer Adam C. Matthews and Marine Raider Staff Sgt. Kevin Maxwell are working out plea deals for the charges they face in connection with the [death of Army Green Beret](#) Staff Sgt. Logan Melgar, 34, in Bamako, Mali on June 4, 2017.

Military Times has verified the report through sources close to [the investigation](#).

Attorneys for both men declined to comment as to whether they were negotiating deals. Brian Bouffard, Maxwell's attorney, told Military Times he could not discuss the case. Grover Baxley, Matthews' attorney, said that it would "inappropriate to comment on possible plea negotiations."

But, Baxley added that his client "does look forward to getting an opportunity to explain the details of what actually happened in Mali in June 2017 since much of the reporting over the past 21 months has contained wildly inaccurate information. Most importantly, though, SOC Matthews hopes that he can assist the Melgar family in reaching some semblance of closure for this tragic situation."

Attorneys for the remaining defendants, Navy SEAL Petty Officer Anthony DeDolph, 39, and Marine Raider Gunnery Sgt. Mario A. Madera-Rodriguez, said that they were not currently negotiating pleas with the government and were awaiting a rescheduling of the Article 32, or preliminary hearing that has now been postponed twice, most recently from March 6.

"... We are in negotiations with the prosecutors for a new hearing date after they requested a continuance," said Phillip Stackhouse, DeDolph's attorney.

Colby Vokey, attorney for Madera-Rodriguez, said he did not know the current status of plea deals for the other defendants.

All four defendants face charges including felony murder, involuntary manslaughter, conspiracy, obstruction of justice, hazing and burglary.

Other than charging information, no official details of the alleged homicide have been released by the government.

Media reports from numerous outlets have collected pieces of information about the morning that Melgar died and events leading up to the incident and immediately following his death.

The two SEAL Team Six members first told investigators they found Melgar unconscious and tried to revive him. They later changed their stories, claiming they were practicing hand-to-hand combat training with Melgar in the residence, and that Melgar was drunk, passed out and they tried to revive him, according to media reports.

But, toxicology reports revealed no alcohol or drugs in Melgar's system and friends told investigators that the staff sergeant didn't drink.



<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2019/03/07/a-seal-and-a-marine-raider-seek-plea-deals-in-green-beret-murder-case/>

The two SEALs later changed their story again, saying that they had ambushed Melgar in his room over a perceived slight when he didn't give them a ride to a party. A witness later told investigators that one of the SEALs said he wanted to "get back" at Melgar for the incident, according to news reports.

But the SEALs didn't initially tell investigators that two Marine Raiders were also in the room and helped restrain Melgar before one of the SEALs put him in a chokehold, which officials believe led to his death by strangulation.

The SEALs said they tried to resuscitate Melgar first through CPR then via a field expedient tracheotomy. But investigators later saw that differently.

According to the charge sheets, they have included the tracheotomy as part of an obstruction of justice charge against the same SEAL accused of choking Melgar, saying he performed the act to "hide evidence of the injuries inflicted" on Melgar.

Document details include allegations that the Marines and the SEALs went to separate housing for the Marines to get duct tape to restrain Melgar.

The four broke into Melgar's locked room to assault him while he was sleeping, according to the charges.

But, at first, the SEALs told investigators the Marines weren't there.

Madera-Rodriguez, the Marine gunny, told investigators that he saw Melgar and another of the defendants talk to each other and "chuckle and smile at the threshold" of Melgar's door.

He also said that one of the SEALs and Melgar voluntarily began to wrestle each other.

Investigators believe both statements were lies, meant to cover up the attack.

Maxwell, the Marine staff sergeant, said he and Madera-Rodriguez were not in the residence and didn't hear anything out of the ordinary. He said he didn't know if anyone was drinking alcohol that night. While specific individuals were not listed in connection with using alcohol, investigators also believe Maxwell lied about alcohol use.

Investigators also have included disposing of the alcohol as part of the larger conspiracy charge against all four co-defendants, again to conceal evidence of what actually happened.

Melgar was close to the end of his deployment when he died. He reportedly told his wife he had a "bad feeling" about some of his fellow troops.

Though Melgar died on June 4, 2017, information on his death was not released to the public and only surfaced after media outlets published reported the accounts months later.

Army Criminal Investigative Division agents were initially assigned the case but turned it over to Naval Criminal Investigative Service on Sept. 24, 2017.

The troops were on a mission to support Malian and French counterterrorism units fighting al-Qaida factions in the region.



**SEE ALSO:**

[Hearing postponed for two Navy SEALs and two Marine Raiders in death of Green Beret staff sergeant](#)

[*Military Times*, 2019-03-01]

# A soldier and a vet indicted for allegedly trying to sell firearms and explosives for export to Mexico

By Meghann Myers

Army Times, March 4, 2019



*Two soldiers are under federal indictment for attempting to sell illegal firearms and explosives to undercover Homeland Security agents in Texas, court documents say. (Wikimedia Commons)*

A former and current explosive ordnance disposal specialist are each under [indictment](#) after they attempted to sell weapons to [federal agents](#) in November, according to court documents.

Former Sgt. Tyler Sumlin and Sgt. 1st Class Jason Jarvis, of 52nd Ordnance Group, face conspiracy, possession and transportation charges stemming from their [illegal business](#) selling firearms, military equipment, C-4 explosives and detonators, according to a criminal complaint filed Nov. 15 in Texas.

The day before, according to the document, the two met up with undercover Homeland Security Department investigators at an El Paso truck stop to make a deal to sell them some weapons that would be exported to Mexico.

“Before traveling to El Paso, Sumlin and Jarvis met at an Airbnb in Florida and prepared the firearms for delivery and wipe the firearms to remove their fingerprints,” the complaint said.

Sumlin served in the Army from 2007 to 2017, an Army spokeswoman confirmed to Army Times on Friday. Jarvis first enlisted in the Army Reserve in 1997, before coming on active duty in 2000.

“Due to the ongoing legal proceedings, it would be inappropriate to comment further on the case at this time. Please direct questions about the case to Homeland Security,” Cathy Vandermaarel said in a statement.

Jarvis rented a Chevy Tahoe in North Carolina, filled it with contraband and then drove to Inverness, Florida, to pick Sumlin up, according to a Dec. 12 indictment.

Their charges include: Conspiracy to smuggle goods from the U.S.; conspiracy to deal firearms without a license; conspiracy to transfer a firearm out of state; conspiracy to transport explosive materials without a license; conspiracy possession of unregistered firearms; attempt to smuggle goods from the U.S.; having an unlicensed firearms business and transporting explosive material without a license, as well as separate counts for possessing unregistered silencers; a short-barreled rifle and a destructive device.

The two pleaded not guilty in late December and are scheduled back in court on April 17, according to the West Texas U.S. district court.

## This sailor brought acid aboard his carrier

By Geoff Ziezulewicz

Navy Times, March 7, 2019



*The guided-missile cruiser Antietam pulls alongside the Navy's forward-deployed aircraft carrier, Ronald Reagan, in the Philippine Sea. (Navy)*

Two more sailors from the aircraft carrier [Ronald Reagan's](#) nuclear department have pleaded guilty to charges involving possessing and distributing illegal drugs, including the hallucinogen [LSD](#).

One of them has copped to a charge that he brought the LSD aboard the Japan-based carrier.

Machinist's Mate (Nuclear Power) 3rd Class Philip S. Colegrove pleaded guilty in January to distributing LSD and [MDMA](#) — a drug better known by its street name “extasy” — in Tokyo, Yokohama and the Reagan's homeport of Yokosuka from January 2017 to February 2018, according to a copy of his plea deal provided to Navy Times.

Colegrove also pleaded guilty to “wrongfully” bringing LSD aboard the carrier in that time span, according to charge sheets.

A military judge sentenced him at court-martial to 10 months confinement, reduction in rank to E-1 and a bad-conduct discharge, according to Cmdr. Reann Mommsen, a spokeswoman for U.S. Naval Forces Japan.

Colegrove's plea deal, however, limits his time behind bars to nine months.

Last month as part of his plea deal, Electrician's Mate (Nuclear Power) 2nd Class Sean M. Gevero admitted to possessing [nandrolone decanoate](#), an anabolic steroid, according to Navy records.

He initially faced a charge for distributing LSD as well.

A judge sentenced him to 90 days of confinement, reduction to E-1 and a bad-conduct discharge, but his plea deal drops the discharge and includes an administrative separation board waiver, according to Mommsen.

Attorneys for Colegrove and Gevero declined comment, Mommsen said.

Those plea deals bring to four the number of Reagan sailors convicted for their roles in what prosecutors purport to be a drug ring.

A fifth sailor whose identity has not been made public is awaiting an [Article 32 hearing](#). An investigating officer will sift through evidence and then make a recommendation to superiors whether the case should go to a court-martial or not.

The Navy generally does not identify sailors before formal charges are referred to a military court.

Ten other sailors from the Reagan's reactor department were administratively disciplined late last year for their ties to the drug ring, 7th Fleet officials said.

# 'Unfounded' Bullying Accusations Sidelined Head Of Grand Canyon For 5 Months

NPR, March 5, 2019



*Grand Canyon National Park Superintendent Christine Lehnertz, seen in 2017 with then-Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, was recently cleared of allegations of workplace harassment. (Felicia Fonseca/AP)*

The details on the [lengthy federal investigation](#) that exonerated the embattled head of Grand Canyon National Park of creating a hostile work environment were released Tuesday.

Park Superintendent Christine Lehnertz was cleared in February of any wrongdoing following allegations she bullied and retaliated against some male leaders at the park and misspent funds, according to a report from the Interior Department's inspector general.

The findings come almost five months after Lehnertz was [hastily reassigned](#) from her post running one of the country's most popular national parks.

"We found no evidence that Lehnertz created a hostile work environment," the report said. "Most of the employees [interviewed] indicated that Lehnertz was generally liked at the park and reported that Lehnertz did not treat men or women differently and held everyone to the same standard."

## *Grand Canyon's history of harassment*

This isn't the first time that an official at Grand Canyon National Park has been dogged by allegations of harassment. In 2014, more than a dozen female park rangers wrote a letter to Interior Secretary Sally Jewell [describing a long-term pattern of sexual harassment](#) and workplace hostility in the park's River District. A federal investigation later [found a total of 35 employees](#) who had witnessed or experienced harassment and hostility there. The scandal made national headlines, led to a congressional hearing and eventually the ouster of then-Superintendent Dave Uberuaga.

Lehnertz took over the park in a push to improve morale and establish stability and decorum.

During a 2016 interview shortly after she was hired, Lehnertz told the public radio collaborative [Fronteras Desk](#) that in order to clean up house there, she needed to set expectations.

"A leader has to be very clear, at the outset, so there's just no question in anyone's mind that there are rewards for those behaviors that are positive and consequences for those that are negative," she said.

Current and former National Park Service employees said Lehnertz was different from previous managers at the park. She really listened.

"When you speak with her, you feel like you've known her forever and she's your best friend," said Martha Hahn, the former science and resource management division chief at Grand Canyon National Park. "I mean that's how comfortable she makes you feel."

That listening, Hahn said, translated into action. Lehnertz helped force out some employees and [created a team](#) tasked with understanding and stopping the cycles of abuse and discrimination at the park. Hahn said Lehnertz did more than address the park's long-term history of sexual harassment and abuse.

"She's also very serious about everyone pulling their load," she said. "And I think that was the part that bothered some people who had spent a lot of time in their career not being pushed like that."

<https://www.npr.org/2019/03/05/700396608/unfounded-bullying-accusations-sidelined-head-of-grand-canyon-for-five-months>

### ***Leadership style***

It was widely known that a handful of managers didn't appreciate Lehnertz's leadership style. John Dillon, executive director of the Grand Canyon River Outfitters Association, said he heard the complaints firsthand from Park Service supervisors who clashed with her.

"I do know a handful of people in the park that have felt very frustrated with the new superintendent's style," he said.

Dillon represents river rafting companies that contract with the National Park Service. He works with employees there and said a few managers felt as if they were walking on eggshells after Lehnertz became superintendent.

"I think the concern is, 'I have another 10 years and I don't want to say something or do something wrong or end up in the crosshairs of somebody who is on a mission to clean house,' " he said.

It's unclear whether that atmosphere led a senior official at the park to file the hostile work environment claim that launched the months-long investigation into Lehnertz. It was spurred after she proposed suspending the employee for not providing important reports and for missing a meeting, according to the Inspector General report. Lehnertz was also accused of bullying male leaders at the park.

However, the Inspector General report said the one-day suspension was warranted and the accusations "unfounded."

### ***Lingering questions***

The federal investigation was launched in October. Soon after, the National Park Service removed Lehnertz from her post and reassigned her to an unspecified position at regional headquarters in Denver.

In an October 2018 [email](#) to employees obtained by *E&E News*, Acting Regional Director Kate Hammond said Lehnertz was reassigned "to protect the integrity of the OIG's investigation into these allegations."

Jon Jarvis, director of the National Park Service during the Obama administration, said that removing a park superintendent like this is rare and that he believes, in this case, the agency overreacted. He hired Lehnertz for the job running Grand Canyon in 2016.

"I know Chris very well," he said. "She volunteered to go to Grand Canyon to take on the issues there with sexual harassment. So I would've thought this seemed a little odd to me that a subordinate was claiming harassment by Chris Lehnertz. I would've wanted to better understand the situation before I tried to move her out of her job."

The National Park Service did not make Chris Lehnertz available for an interview. But in an emailed statement, an agency spokesperson said she's "a talented and dedicated executive of the National Park Service and her commitment to building a respectful and inclusive workplace is sincere, broadly demonstrated and widely respected."

The agency also said it wouldn't comment on personnel actions, the investigation or when Lehnertz would return to Grand Canyon.

The park turned 100 years old last week, and Lehnertz wasn't there to celebrate.

*This story was produced by the Mountain West News Bureau, a collaboration among Wyoming Public Media, Boise State Public Radio in Idaho, KUER in Salt Lake City, and KRCC and KUNC in Colorado.*

# **Racism**

## Black activist says he took over neo-Nazi group to kill it

The Associated Press, March 2, 2019



*In this Thursday, June 14, 2012 file photo, James Stern of Jackson, Miss., at a news conference in Jackson, Miss. One of the largest and oldest neo-Nazi groups in the U.S. appears to have an unlikely new leader: Stern, a black activist who has vowed to dismantle it. (AP Photo/Rogelio V. Solis)*

MORENO VALLEY, Calif. (AP) — A black activist said he has taken the helm of what has been billed as one of the nation’s largest neo-Nazi groups to put it out of business.

Corporate records show James Stern of Moreno Valley, California, is now president of the National Socialist Movement. He replaces previous longtime leader Jeff Schoep.

In an [interview with The Associated Press](#) on Friday, Stern said he established a yearslong dialogue with Schoep and convinced the former leader to transfer the organization to him when Schoep said he planned to disband it.

“The National Socialist Movement put a poison pill into the truth of history. I think we can put the antidote to make sure that we correct some of those wrongs,” Stern said.

Stern said he prefers to control the group and neuter it rather than see it disband and reconstitute in the shadows. “If he dissolved the group, all anyone would have to do is take it and reincorporate it and carry on the same shenanigans as it never stopped,” Stern said.

Schoep’s resignation comes as he and the National Socialist Movement are among a slew of defendants in a civil lawsuit filed by survivors of a violent 2017 white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. Plaintiffs in that case recently filed a motion accusing Schoep of doing everything he could to cause procedural delays and duck accountability for his conduct.

In a phone interview, Schoep said Stern essentially tricked him into transferring leadership. He said Stern suggested that the plaintiffs would no longer pursue the lawsuit against Schoep and the NSM if Schoep handed over the reins. Schoep said he was preparing to leave the party leadership anyway, and agreed to Stern’s proposal as a way to try to reduce the party’s legal liability.

“He has that piece of paper, but he is absolutely not recognized as the leader of the National Socialist Movement,” Schoep, a Detroit resident, said of Stern.

Stern, though, says he can speak for the NSM, and filed his own motion in that case Thursday, saying the group now admits its liability in the lawsuit.

“Justice must be served and the truth must be told,” Stern wrote in the motion. “Consequences must be excepted (sic).”

It is unclear whether the judge will accept Stern’s status to speak for the organization.

Stern’s actions invited comparisons to the recent Spike Lee movie “BlacKkKlansman” in which a black police officer infiltrates a branch of the Ku Klux Klan.

The lawsuit against Schoep, the National Socialist Movement and other white nationalist groups describes NSM as one of the nation’s largest neo-Nazi groups, but a former officer in the group recently told the AP that it had only about 40 active, dues-paying members last year.

# Religion



# Rep. Omar's comments force Democrats to act on anti-Semitism measure

By Mike DeBonis

The Washington Post, March 4, 2019



*Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.), seen Feb. 5 in Washington. (Carolyn Kaster/AP)*

A string of allegedly anti-Semitic public comments from freshman Rep. Ilhan Omar has enraged fellow Democrats and forced Speaker Nancy Pelosi and other top House leaders to take fresh action against one of the early stars of the freshman class.

Lawmakers could vote as soon as Wednesday on a House resolution condemning anti-Semitism prompted by [comments Omar \(Minn.\) made last week](#) at an event where she suggested that supporters of Israel's government have an "allegiance to a foreign country."

The draft resolution "acknowledges the dangerous consequences of perpetuating anti-Semitic stereotypes" and "rejects anti-Semitism as hateful expressions of intolerance that are contradictory to the values that define the people of the United States." But it does not specifically rebuke Omar.

Still, chastising her indirectly represents an uncomfortable development for Democrats who have been celebrating Omar, a Somali American immigrant, as a symbol of a historically diverse House freshman class.

This month, Rolling Stone magazine featured a smiling Omar on the cover alongside Pelosi (Calif.) and fellow newcomers Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) and Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.) — an image that was celebrated Saturday in a [tweet](#) by Pelosi's political operation.

But just days earlier, Omar had rekindled a firestorm over her criticism of Israel through comments on the motivations of the nation's U.S. supporters. "I want to talk about the political influence in this country that says it is okay for people to push for allegiance to a foreign country," Omar said at the event, held Wednesday at a Washington restaurant that frequently hosts left-wing artists and activists.

According to critics, Omar's comments played into a long-standing attack that Jews cannot be considered loyal citizens of their home countries — and they came after two previous occasions where Omar apologized for making comments with anti-Semitic overtones in the course of criticizing Israeli government policy.

"The idea that certain members of Congress seemingly believe it is acceptable to use historic anti-Semitic tropes accusing Jews of dual loyalty, despite the broad condemnation of the entire House Democratic leadership, is beyond me," said Rep. Josh Gottheimer (D-N.J.), who has been involved in crafting the resolution. He called Omar's rhetoric "reminiscent of other hurtful episodes in our history, including when President John F. Kennedy's loyalty was called into question simply because he was Irish Catholic."

Omar apologized in January for a 2012 tweet in which she said Israel had "hypnotized the world" and [apologized again](#) last month after suggesting on Twitter that Israel's supporters were motivated by campaign contributions. That prompted the House to add [Republican-offered language](#) to a recent measure on the "importance of combating anti-Semitism."

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/rep-omar-comments-prompt-house-democrats-to-craft-anti-semitism-measure/2019/03/04/1a4d8c12-3ea8-11e9-922c-64d6b7840b82\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/rep-omar-comments-prompt-house-democrats-to-craft-anti-semitism-measure/2019/03/04/1a4d8c12-3ea8-11e9-922c-64d6b7840b82_story.html)

But Omar has not apologized for her most recent statements, defending them instead in Twitter postings Sunday.

“I am told everyday that I am anti-American if I am not pro-Israel,” she [wrote](#). “I find that to be problematic and I am not alone. I just happen to be willing to speak up on it and open myself to attacks.”

A spokesman for Omar did not reply Monday to a request for comment on the plans for a vote. Drew Hammill, a spokesman for Pelosi, declined to comment.

Omar has herself been subject to attacks based on her religion, including the [posting of a sign](#) at the West Virginia state capitol linking her to the 9/11 attacks. The sign, at an event hosted by the state Republican Party, juxtaposed an image of the attack on the World Trade Center with a photo of Omar at a congressional hearing — with text calling it “proof you have forgotten.”

The most immediate fallout from Omar’s remarks stand to play out within the Democratic caucus. The latest episode could widen the breach between the party’s traditional supporters of Israel, who include Pelosi and Majority Leader Steny H. Hoyer (Md.), and liberals who are critical of Israel’s treatment of the Palestinian population within its borders and want Congress to take a more skeptical view of the U.S.-Israel relationship.

That split has helped drive the response to Omar’s latest remarks. A small group of stalwart Democratic Israel allies, including Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Eliot L. Engel (N.Y.) and Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Nita M. Lowey (N.Y.), as well as Gottheimer, Rep. Ted Deutch (Fla.) and others, worked through the weekend to craft the resolution and push leaders for its passage.

Engel on Friday called it “unacceptable and deeply offensive to call into question the loyalty of fellow American citizens because of their political views, including support for the U.S.-Israel relationship.”

“Her comments were outrageous and deeply hurtful, and I ask that she retract them, apologize and commit to making her case on policy issues without resorting to attacks that have no place in the Foreign Affairs Committee or the House of Representatives,” he said.

Rep. Juan Vargas (D-Calif.) went so far as to say in a [Monday tweet](#) that “questioning support for the U.S.-Israel relationship is unacceptable” and called on Omar to apologize.

Adding to the pressure Monday, Jonathan Greenblatt, chief executive of the Anti-Defamation League, wrote to Pelosi asking for a congressional resolution rejecting anti-Semitism to “send the unambiguous message that the United States Congress is no place for hate.”

Throughout the past two months, Republicans pressured Democrats to take action against Omar — accusing them of tolerating anti-Semitism in their ranks. Numerous Republicans, including House Republican Conference Chairwoman Liz Cheney (Wyo.), used social media to [slam Pelosi](#) for posing with Omar for Rolling Stone.

“Pretending to condemn @IlhanMN’s anti-semitism while embracing her on this cover & claiming she embodies ‘millions of dreams to women & girls across America’ is disgraceful and immoral,” Cheney said.

GOP lawmakers are pressuring Democrats to take further action by removing Omar from the Foreign Affairs Committee, which has jurisdiction over U.S.-Israel relations, but two Democrats involved in the drafting of the resolution said that was not under consideration.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/rep-omars-comments-prompt-house-democrats-to-craft-anti-semitism-measure/2019/03/04/1a4d8c12-3ea8-11e9-922c-64d6b7840b82\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/rep-omars-comments-prompt-house-democrats-to-craft-anti-semitism-measure/2019/03/04/1a4d8c12-3ea8-11e9-922c-64d6b7840b82_story.html)

“Resolutions are all well and good, but Speaker Pelosi is clearly afraid to stand up to Rep. Omar if she continues to reward her with a plum spot on the Foreign Affairs Committee,” House Minority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.) [said Monday](#).

*Karoun Demirjian contributed to this report.*

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**SEE ALSO:**

[Omar’s Israel remarks expose Democrats’ simmering divisions](#) [*The Associated Press*, 2019-03-06]

[House Democrats erupt in protests over indirect sanction of Rep. Omar for alleged anti-Semitism](#) [*The Washington Post*, 2019-03-06]

[Ocasio-Cortez questions criticism of Omar: 'No one seeks this level of reprimand' for statements about other groups](#) [*The Hill*, 2019-03-05]

[Pelosi seeks to tamp down anti-Semitism controversy](#) [*The Hill*, 2019-03-04]

## Senators should stop asking about judicial nominees' religious beliefs [OPINION]

*There are other ways to inquire about their fitness for office — that don't violate the Constitution.*

By Paul J. McNulty and John A. Sparks

The Washington Post, March 4, 2019



*Neomi Rao, President Trump's nominee for a seat on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, appears before the Senate Judiciary Committee in February. (J. Scott Applewhite/AP)*

At her Feb. 5 confirmation hearing for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit — to fill a vacancy resulting from Brett M. Kavanaugh's elevation to the Supreme Court — Neomi Rao faced [tough questioning](#) from Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee. Sen. Cory Booker (N.J.) interrogated her about her personal views on same-sex marriage.

“Do you believe [same-sex marriages] are a sin?” he asked. Rao avoided the question by insisting that she would put her personal views to the side when deciding cases. Booker persisted: “So you're not saying here whether you believe it is sinful for two men to be married?”

This is not the first time we have heard this troubling line of questioning.

In a 2003 hearing, [Sen. Charles E. Schumer](#) (D-N.Y.) said of Judge William Pryor, a nominee, that his “beliefs are so well known, so deeply held, that it's very hard to believe ... that they're not going to deeply influence the way he comes about saying, ‘I will follow the law.’ ” In 2017, Sens. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Richard J. Durbin (D-Ill.) engaged in similar colloquies with Amy Coney Barrett, a professor who was nominated for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit. Barrett is a Catholic who taught at Notre Dame Law School. Her religious convictions are in line with Catholic teaching, and she had made her views known about abortion and capital punishment in writing and speaking before her nomination.

Casting aside respect for Barrett's religious freedom, [Feinstein](#) observed, “When you read your speeches, the conclusion one draws is that dogma lives loudly within you.” Durbin followed up by asking Barrett if she considered herself an “orthodox Catholic.” Feinstein, by referring to “dogma,” undoubtedly meant the authoritative tenets and teachings of the Catholic Church. In these examples, as well as in the exchanges with Rao, senators were seeking to elicit responses or drawing conclusions based on the nominee's religious views.

Are religious convictions fair game in the confirmation process? Not according to Article VI of the U.S. Constitution. Clause 3 reads as follows: “No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.” According to the limited records of the Constitutional Convention, this provision was approved almost unanimously. As [historian Gerard Bradley](#) has pointed out, the banning of religious tests for federal office is somewhat puzzling because it runs contrary to the actual practice in the states at the time of the adoption of the Constitution; many had religious tests for holding office. The same could be said of the First Amendment language prohibiting Congress from making any law “respecting an establishment of religion.” This protection was ratified at the very time when some states had “established” churches — that is, government-supported churches. However, the intention of the

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2019/03/04/senators-should-stop-asking-about-judicial-nominees-religious-beliefs/>

Founders in both Article VI and the First Amendment seems to be clear: The new national government would not favor, either by religious tests for office, or by tax support, particular religious denominations. It's worth noting that in 1961, the Supreme Court in [\*Torcaso v. Watkins\*](#) extended the prohibition on religious tests to state governments. The court concluded that the states, like the federal government, invade "the freedom of belief and religion" protected by the First and 14th amendments when they impose religious tests for state positions.

That's not to say the question of how religion might influence judges, broadly, is always off limits. In a 1998 law review article, which she co-wrote as a law student with Notre Dame Law School professor John Garvey (currently president of Catholic University), Barrett herself mused about a possible conflict between a Catholic judge's allegiance to Catholic teaching opposing capital punishment and existing constitutional case law that supported capital punishment. Like the late Justice Antonin Scalia, Barrett concluded in the article that "judges cannot — nor should they try to — align our legal system with the Church's moral teaching when the two diverge." The recognition of that potential conflict apparently concerned certain members of the Judiciary Committee, although the article itself seemed to conclude that a judge in that position might have to consider recusing himself or herself.

But the way the Judiciary Committee has pursued the issue is over the line. Senate Democrats are *not* focused on the nominees' general ethical moorings or their moral compasses, nor are they probing nominees' allegiance to what is honest, true and right as they conduct themselves in office. Instead, these questions and statements are meant to unmask particular tenets of potential judges' religious faith that the interrogators fear run counter to their own political stances on issues such as abortion and gay rights.

The Constitution authorizes the president to "nominate, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate" appoint people for service as federal judges and justices on the Supreme Court, as well as other senior positions within the executive branch. The vast majority of these presidential nominees since the founding have not been subjected to the challenges of today's modern confirmation hearings. Even a hearing for a Supreme Court nominee was a rarity before the 1950s. Sandra Day O'Connor was the first nominee to have a televised confirmation hearing, in 1981. Since then, the TV cameras have afforded ambitious senators plenty of opportunity to grab the spotlight or placate their political base with unfriendly questions.

Still, the Senate's confirmation authority was designed as a proper check on the executive's power of appointment. In [\*Federalist No. 76\*](#), Alexander Hamilton argued that the Senate's concurrence in the president's selections "would be an excellent check upon a spirit of favoritism in the president, and would tend greatly to prevent the appointment of unfit characters from state prejudice, from family connection, from personal attachment, or from a view to popularity. . . . It would be an efficacious source of stability in the administration." The drama of modern confirmation hearings may not be a necessary component of this responsibility, but it is appropriate for the Senate to consider a nominee's competency and character, or fitness for office, before appointment.

Questions relevant to a broad assessment of moral character are justified: Nominees for federal office ought to be people of good character in addition to being intellectually capable. The trustworthiness of a nominee's assurances that she will fulfill her responsibilities in accordance with the law rests in large measure on the nominee's reputation for integrity. However, it should not matter, for the purposes of the committee's questions, whether the foundation for the nominee's good character are firm religious convictions, or — by operation of God's common grace — a commitment to good behavior apart from religious belief.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2019/03/04/senators-should-stop-asking-about-judicial-nominees-religious-beliefs/>

So where do the inquiries that Democrats have been aiming at Republican judicial nominees fall? Are they proper questions about character and fitness, or do they exceed the boundaries set by Article VI? The questions exceed the limits of Article VI because of what they do and what they don't do: They don't tell the Judiciary Committee members anything about a nominee's integrity, character or suitability for office. They do, however, aim at making a public issue of the nominee's religious beliefs and how these convictions do not square with the questioner's own political posture on current divisive issues such as capital punishment, abortion and gay rights. Often questioners persist even after the nominees maintain that they will be guided only by the existing law and the Constitution that they take a solemn oath to uphold.

An insightful [Harvard Law Review note](#) on Article VI in 2007 concludes: "The drafters and proponents of the No Religious Test Clause would be astonished to learn that members of the Senate Judiciary Committee have questioned judicial nominees under oath about their religious beliefs and the extent of those beliefs. ... Requiring a nominee under oath to profess a religious belief runs afoul of the clause [in Article VI]."

Nominees, presented with these types of questions, should firmly object to them, citing the wisdom of our Founders in adopting Article VI, Clause 3, of the Constitution. At stake is nothing less than the freedom of conscience enshrined in our national charter.

# Supreme Court refuses to hear church requests for historic preservation funds

By Richard Wolf

USA TODAY, March 4, 2019



*The Supreme Court is faced with several cases involving the separation of church and state. (Photo: J. Scott Applewhite, AP)*

WASHINGTON – The Supreme Court refused Monday to consider whether churches and other religious institutions should be able to receive public taxpayer funds for historic preservation.

The action stopped short of extending the justices' 2017 ruling that churches can be eligible for purely secular grant programs such

as [playground renovations](#).

New Jersey's Supreme Court ruled unanimously last year that religious institutions were ineligible for government funds under the New Jersey Constitution. The state justices reached that conclusion despite the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in the Missouri playground case the year before.

The Supreme Court's action apparently was unanimous, but three conservative justices registered their concern that the lower court decision "is in serious tension with this Court's religious equality precedents."

"At some point, this court will need to decide whether governments that distribute historic preservation funds may deny funds to religious organizations simply because the organizations are religious," Associate Justice Brett Kavanaugh wrote. Justices Samuel Alito and Neil Gorsuch agreed.

Chief Justice John Roberts wrote the [high court's 7-2 opinion](#) in the 2017 playground case, which included a footnote that some interpreted as limiting its applicability to playgrounds. Even so, it had implications for as many as 39 states with constitutional provisions that block public funds from going to religious organizations.

"The exclusion of Trinity Lutheran from a public benefit for which it is otherwise qualified, solely because it is a church, is odious to our Constitution," Roberts wrote then.

Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor vehemently dissented from that decision, which she said "discounts centuries of history and jeopardizes the government's ability to remain secular." She was joined by Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg but not the high court's other two liberal justices.

The court could have chosen to hear the appeal from Morris County, N.J., or it could have reversed the lower court and allowed the funding.

Another major case on the separation of church and state also is before the justices: Whether a [40-foot Latin cross](#) that towers over a small Maryland suburb of Washington, D.C., violates the Constitution, even though it was built as a memorial to World War I veterans. A ruling on that case is expected by June.

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## SEE ALSO:

[U.S. Supreme Court turns away religious rights case over church grants](#) [Reuters, 2019-03-04]

# Sexism



# Activists campaign for treaty to end violence against women

By Edith M. Lederer

The Associated Press, March 4, 2019

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Women’s rights activists from 128 nations are launching a public campaign Tuesday for an international treaty to end violence against women and girls, a global scourge estimated by the United Nations to affect 35 percent of females worldwide.

The campaign led by the Seattle-based nonprofit organization Every Woman Treaty aims to have the U.N. World Health Organization adopt the treaty with the goal of getting all 193 U.N. member states to ratify it.

“Violence against women and girls is the most widespread human rights violation on Earth,” the organization’s co-founder and chief executive, Lisa Shannon, told The Associated Press in an interview Monday ahead of the official launch.

“All the efforts that people put into development, education, women’s empowerment, economic opportunity are being squashed when women are not physically safe,” she said. “It’s a global pandemic. ... We cannot make progress as a species without addressing violence against women and girls.”

The activists want the treaty to require countries to take four actions that have proven to lower rates of violence against women:

- Adopt laws punishing domestic violence, which lower mortality rates for women.
- Train police, judges, nurses, doctors and other professionals about such violence, which leads to increased prosecution of perpetrators and better treatment for survivors.
- Provide education on preventing violence against women and girls, which research shows has an influence on boys’ and men’s attitudes and actions, and encourages women and girls to demand their rights.
- Provide hotlines, shelters, legal advice, treatment and other services for survivors.

Eleanor Eleanor Nwadinobi of Nigeria, a member of Every Woman Treaty’s steering committee, said the other critical issue is funding, which “is absolutely essential” to enable governments, especially in developing countries, to carry out this essential work to combat violence against women and girls.

Shannon said the activists are modeling their campaign after the efforts that led to the successful treaty on eliminating land mines, which took force in 1999, and the treaty aimed at limiting the use of tobacco, which was the first pact negotiated under WHO auspices and entered into force in 2005.

In the first 36 hours of the mine ban treaty, nations pledged \$500 million toward its implementation, Shannon said.

She expressed hope that a treaty tackling violence against women and girls would lead to a \$4 billion-a-year fund for financing global action, “which would be about a dollar per female on Earth.”

Every Woman Treaty was started in 2013 and Shannon said it has been working behind the scenes to build support and come up with recommendations and a rough draft of a treaty.

More than 4,000 individuals and organizations have signed what she called “a one-page people’s treaty” that condemns all forms of violence against women and girls, outlines the actions sought in a treaty, and urges nations to adopt it. Among the signatories are Nobel Peace Prize winners Shirin Ebadi of Iran, Tawakol Karman of Yemen and Jody Williams of the United States.

Shannon said the activists are seeking 20 countries to lead the campaign for the new treaty.

<https://www.apnews.com/06eabab0fe4c407296c37d0115899ecb>

First, she said, they need the World Health Organization to approve a resolution seeking a report on the role a treaty would play. “Our goal is to have the resolution introduced at the 2020 World Health Assembly,” which she called very ambitious.

Once a report is written, Shannon said, the World Health Assembly would have to approve the process for drafting a treaty.

“The largest obstacle I see is to fight the apathy,” she said. “When you’re asking for global systems change and genuine commitments, even people who are pro-women’s rights will question whether or not it’s needed, will say it’s unnecessary — and this is something the tobacco and land mines and disabilities treaties faced.”

Shannon said the biggest immediate challenge is finding countries willing to take on a leadership role and getting people to understand this is “an opportunity that we have to take right now” because “we are not going to advance” unless violence against women and girls is addressed.

*On the web: <https://everywoman.org>*

# **Sexual Assault / Harassment**

# Advocates for sexual assault victims create one-stop support site

By Matthew M. Burke

Stars and Stripes, March 5, 2019



*Adrian Perry is a co-founder of Survivors United, a sexual assault victims advocacy group launched in February. (Courtesy of Adrian Perry)*

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Two women have joined together to help victims of sexual assault in the military find justice in a system they say often regards victims as an afterthought.

Survivors United is a sexual-assault victims advocacy group that offers a one-stop shop of resources at [www.survivorsunited1.com](http://www.survivorsunited1.com). At the site, visitors can find information and links to other sites for help reporting a sexual assault and coping with its aftermath.

Adrian Perry, a Marine Corps spouse, and Kylisha Boyd, a civilian, are the group's co-founders. Survivors United is a start-up organization, but both women said they have the backing of others.

“You just have no clue where to begin or what to do next,” Perry said, referring to the aftermath of a sexual assault. “We strive to be the organization that is in the trenches with the survivor, fighting with them, so that they can be heard, whatever they choose to do.”

The website offers instructions for each individual and situation, whether as an active-duty servicemember, National Guard and Reserve, transitioning servicemember or civilian. The site has information on the difference between confidentially reporting a crime and an investigation undertaken by a military command.

It provides legal statutes and rights as far as seeking prosecution inside or out of the military system; information on obtaining special victims' counsel; how to file a Freedom of Information Act request for pertinent case files; how to report reprisal; resources and treatment options.

It also provides forms and information on how to contact members of Congress if a victim feels his or her case has been swept under the rug.

Perry's role as a survivors' advocate took root in summer 2016, when her daughter, age 6 at the time, told her family that Daniel Wilson, a Marine Corps colonel, had touched her inappropriately.

Wilson was convicted by a court-martial in September 2017 of sexual abuse of a child as well as six counts of conduct unbecoming an officer and absence without leave. He was sentenced to 5 ½ years in prison.

From the start, Perry said, her family became entangled in a bureaucratic web of military law enforcement and judicial proceedings where nobody seemed to fully comprehend their rights or available options.

The process itself seemed disproportionately callous and unfair toward victims, she said.

Perry wanted to make sure that no other family had to go through a similar situation, so she teamed with Boyd and launched Survivors United in February.

“You're not always made aware of all of your rights,” she said. “Our main goal is to be able to provide people with knowledge and empower survivors so that they can move forward and figure out the way ahead after an assault like this.”

<https://www.stripes.com/news/pacific/advocates-for-sexual-assault-victims-create-one-stop-support-site-1.571528>

Boyd said she was sexually assaulted by a U.S. servicemember in Virginia in 2016. Navigating the military justice system was an eye-opening experience that led her to advocacy, she said.

“It is difficult to get a conviction in any prosecution of a sexual assault,” she said. “I was completely unprepared for the events following the initial report. The dynamic of military involvement added another layer of difficulty and complexity.”

Boyd said her civilian status made it hard to obtain legal help in her case; she said she got no legal assistance from the military and could not find a local lawyer interested in taking on the military.

Ultimately, Boyd said, the servicemember was acquitted at a bench trial by a military judge.

“Overall, my experience with the military justice system was one disappointment after another,” she said.

“In the beginning, I hoped that the military would be proactive in securing vital evidence from my attacker — defensive wounds, forensic evidence, text messages revealing his guilt, etc. ... None of this was obtained from him. This is a systemic issue where the victim is the sole source of evidence during investigation.”

Each branch of the military does have victim advocates, Perry said.

In Perry’s case, she said more emphasis was placed on the rank of the accused and his service record than on the evidence. Wilson, who at the time was on the II Marine Expeditionary Force general staff at Camp Lejeune, N.C., was also accused of sexually abusing a second daughter and plying the third with alcohol.

The Perry family sued the Marine Corps for \$25 million for the pain and suffering of their three daughters and for long-term mental-health treatment. The Marine Corps has denied the claim, Perry said. The family plans to file for reconsideration before filing a lawsuit in federal court.

Perry said that when they called the Naval Criminal Investigative Service to report Wilson, they were unaware of the process and their rights. A full understanding of these rights, available options and procedural issues were not explained in layman’s terms, she said.

At times, Perry said, she and her family felt they were the ones under investigation. They were shocked, for example, when they were asked to give up their mobile devices, but Wilson was not required to do so in the search for evidence.

Perry has become a fierce advocate for her family but also for anyone else who has experienced sexual assault, Boyd said.

“Adrian and I saw in each other the struggles we shared, and both wanted to lessen the load for others going through the process,” she said.

[burke.matt@stripes.com](mailto:burke.matt@stripes.com)

# Arizona senator reveals she was raped by a superior officer while in the Air Force

By Leo Shane III

Military Times, March 6, 2019



*Sen. Martha McSally, R-Ariz., is shown before a December 2018 news conference in Phoenix. McSally, the first female fighter pilot to fly in combat, says she was raped in the Air Force by a superior officer. (Matt York/AP)*

WASHINGTON — [Arizona Sen. Martha McSally](#), a former Air Force colonel and one of the first female combat veterans elected to Congress, revealed she was raped by a superior officer during her military career but kept the attack secret out of [fear of reprisal](#).

“Like so many women and men, I didn’t trust the system at the time,” she said during a hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee. “I blamed myself. I was ashamed and confused. I thought I was strong but felt powerless. The perpetrators abused their position of power in profound ways.”

The revelation came as the committee heard from [other military sexual assault victims](#), and questioned Pentagon officials on whether have done enough to address the problem.

Earlier this year, the Defense Department’s Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office found the number of service academy cadets reporting unwanted sexual encounters increased almost 50 percent over the last three years, to 747 incidents in 2018.

That news has spurred a series of hearings and legislative proposals in recent weeks aimed at changing cultural norms within the military, and forcing more aggressive action by Defense Department leadership.

McSally, a Republican lawmaker who has been an outspoken voice on issues of equality of women in the ranks, served in the Air Force from 1988 to 2010. She was the first military woman to fly in combat after the military lifted rules barring them from those pilot posts, and provided close-air support during operations in Iraq and Kuwait as part of Operation Southern Watch.

She did not say when the assault occurred or who her attacker was, but did say she did not discuss it with anyone until years later.

“Later in my career, as the military grappled with (sexual assault) scandals and their wholly inadequate responses, I felt the need to let some people know I too was a survivor,” she said. “I was horrified at how my attempt to share generally my experiences was handled.

“I almost separated from the Air Force at 18 years of service over my despair. Like many victims, I felt like the system was raping me all over again.”

Despite that experience, McSally said she does not support legislation to remove sexual assault and harassment crimes from the rest of the military justice system. A number of advocates have pushed for that move, saying that military leaders have repeatedly shown they are not equipped to properly respond to the crimes or handle their prosecution.

“I share the disgust of the failures of the military system,” she said. “But it is for this very reason that we must allow, we must demand, that commanders stay at the center of the solution and live up to the moral and legal responsibilities that come with being a commander.

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2019/03/06/arizona-senator-reveals-she-was-raped-by-a-superior-officer-while-in-the-air-force/>

“We must fix those distortions in the culture of our military that permit sexual harm.”

McSally was appointed to the open Arizona Senate seat after losing the November election against Democrat Kyrsten Sinema. During that campaign, McSally told the Wall Street Journal that she was sexually abused as a teen by a high school track coach.

McSally is one of three Iraq War combat veterans in the Senate today, including Iowa Republican Joni Ernst and Illinois Democrat Tammy Duckworth. Duckworth was on hand at the subcommittee hearing for McSally’s announcement and was among senators who praised her courage and insight on the issue.

McSally called the problem of sexual assault in the ranks a threat to national security.

“Commanders have a moral responsibility to ensure readiness of their units,” she said. “That includes warfighting skills, but demands the commander cultivates and protects and enriches a culture of teamwork, respect, and honor.

“Any conduct that degrades this readiness doesn’t just harm individuals in the ranks, it harms the mission and places at risk the security of our country.”

In a statement following the hearing, Air Force officials issued a statement saying "the criminal actions reported today by Senator McSally violate every part of what it means to be an airman. We are appalled and deeply sorry for what Senator McSally experienced and we stand behind her and all victims of sexual assault.

"We are steadfast in our commitment to eliminate this reprehensible behavior and breach of trust in our ranks.”



**SEE ALSO:**

[SecAf: 'I Have A Greater Respect' for Sen. Martha McSally After Disclosure](#) [*Military.com*, 2019-03-07]

[Sen. Martha McSally Says She Was Raped by Officer While in Air Force](#) [*Military.com*, 2019-03-06]

# Bagram air wing gets poor reviews on sexual assault response

By J.P. Lawrence

Stars and Stripes, March 1, 2019



*A Sexual Assault Prevention and Response mural at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. (Courtesy of the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing)*

KABUL, Afghanistan — An Air Force combat wing at Bagram Air Field has received poor reviews in how it responded to sexual assault among deployed airmen last year, which some advocates said was a troubling issue at the U.S. military’s largest base in Afghanistan.

The 455th Air Expeditionary Wing did not effectively manage its Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program, according to an audit completed last July by the Air Force Auditing Agency and obtained via a records request.

“Inadequate program oversight” led to the response coordinator for the 455th AEW not properly documenting sexual assault reports and the wing not informing newcomers to the base about resources available to them, the audit found.

Brig. Gen. David Lyons, the wing’s current commander, agreed with the findings, which covered a timeframe before he assumed command of the unit. A wing spokeswoman provided Stars and Stripes a list of changes the wing made to fix deficiencies found by the audit.

Another air wing in the Middle East audited last year, the 386th Air Expeditionary Wing, mostly complied with military guidelines on handling sexual assault reports, though it also had a few deficiencies, such as not some responders not completing required training. It’s unclear when programs at the other four wings in the Air Force’s Middle East command were last reviewed.

The results of the two audits were particularly disappointing, as women deployed to combat zones are more likely to be sexually assaulted than at their home station, said Don Christensen, president of the advocacy group Protect Our Defenders.

“It should be a top priority for commanders to ensure all required training is completed and all services are available to survivors,” said Christensen, a former chief prosecutor of the Air Force.

The audit results come amid efforts by the Pentagon to prevent sexual assault within its ranks.

Two-thirds of women in the U.S. military say they have been sexually harassed or assaulted in the service, according to a recent poll by Smithsonian Magazine in conjunction with Stars and Stripes and the Schar School at George Mason University.

The military received 6,769 reports of sexual assault involving servicemembers as either victims or subjects in fiscal year 2017, the latest year there is an official report.

The 455th AEW, which trains and assists the Afghan air force, received three reported sexual assault cases in fiscal year 2017 but did not maintain required paperwork for two of them, the audit found.

“The extremely low report numbers tell me survivors do not know their options and do not have faith in their deployed leadership,” Christensen said.



<https://www.stripes.com/news/bagram-air-wing-gets-poor-reviews-on-sexual-assault-response-1.570886>

Personnel are also required to hold monthly meetings about the status of victims and their cases. It is unclear if the Bagram-based wing conducted these meetings, as nothing was recorded in the official database, as required.

Incorrect contact information for the program coordinator was posted at seven out of 10 locations observed, auditors found. The wing also chose not to brief newcomers about resources for victims of sexual assault.

The review shows Bagram officials did not take sexual assault seriously, said Ellen Haring, chief executive at the Service Women's Action Network, who read copies of the reports.

“Commanders are critical to eliminating sexual assault in the ranks,” Haring said. “If they don’t take it seriously, then their subordinates won’t take it seriously.”

Lyons, the wing’s current commander, now personally briefs newcomers on sexual assault prevention and response programs, the wing spokeswoman said.

[lawrence.jp@stripes.com](mailto:lawrence.jp@stripes.com) *Twitter: @jplawrence3*

<https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2019/03/07/fort-gordon-sailors-charged-with-raping-sodomizing-18-year-old-woman-at-party/>

## Fort Gordon sailors charged with raping, sodomizing 18-year-old woman at party

By J.D. Simkins

Navy Times, March 7, 2019



*Three Fort Gordon-based sailors (right to left) Michael Billington, Teddy Diake and Johnathan Augustus have been charged with the rape and aggravated sodomy of an*

*18-year-old woman at a March 3 party. (Richmond County Sheriff's Office)*

Three sailors based at Fort Gordon in Georgia are behind bars following allegations that they raped a teenager.

Cryptologic Technician (Technical) Seaman Recruit Johnathan Mychael Augustus, Cryptologic Technician (Technical) 3rd Class Michael Jamal Billington and Cryptologic Technician (Collection) Seaman Teddy Diake, all 24 years old, were taken into custody by officers from the Richmond County Sheriff's Office on Tuesday and charged with rape and aggravated sodomy, according to jail records.

The jail log shows that they're awaiting an initial bond hearing and defense attorneys have not been appointed to their cases.

The charges stem from an alleged incident involving an 18-year-old woman during a March 3 party at a Richmond County apartment complex, according to a prepared statement from authorities [obtained by local media](#).

The victim was reportedly taken to a local hospital where she was treated for "[a number of undisclosed injuries](#)."

"The Richmond County Sheriff's Office, with the assistance of Naval Criminal Investigative Service, is investigating allegations of a sexual assault that took place March 3 involving three service members," Lt. Cmdr. Ben Tisdale, a spokesman for Fleet Cyber Command, U.S. 10th Fleet, told Navy Times.

"We take allegations of this nature very seriously," he said.

Augustus enlisted in 2014 and was most recently assigned to the guided-missile destroyer Ross before reporting to the Fort Gordon-based Navy Information Operations Command.

Billington joined the Navy that same year and served on board the guided-missile destroyer O'Kane prior to getting orders to Fort Gordon.

Navy Information Operations command is Diake's first assignment following Information Warfare Training in Pensacola, Florida. He enlisted in 2017.

# Okinawa-based sailor sentenced to five years for attempted rape of a child, other charges

By Caitlin Doornbos

Stars and Stripes, March 6, 2019

A Japan-based sailor was sentenced to five years in prison after being convicted in a court-martial last week of charges stemming from the attempted sexual abuse of two children, according to court documents.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Allen J. Jewell, an operations specialist assigned to Fleet Activities Okinawa, was found guilty Friday of attempted rape of a child; attempted sexual abuse of a child through a lewd act; attempted sexual abuse of a child through indecent communication; bringing discredit to the armed forces; and indecent language.

Jewell went to an apartment Sept. 12 to commit a sexual act on a girl he believed was 8 years old, according to court documents. He arranged the meeting through someone he believed was the girl's mother, and from Sept. 10 through Sept. 12 sent that person explicit text messages about his sexual plans for the child.

From Sept. 9-12, Jewell also texted graphic sexual messages to a person he believed was a different child younger than 16 years old, according to the charge sheet. The messages suggested Jewell believed the person was underage, saying that the two "would have to keep a low profile [because] of your age," according to court documents.

The court documents did not reveal with whom Jewell was communicating in either case, but Naval Criminal Investigative Services agents have played such roles in the past.

Jewell will receive credit against his sentence for 170 days spent in the brig prior to his conviction. In addition to his confinement, his rate has been reduced to E-1, he will be dismissed from the Navy with a dishonorable discharge and forfeit all pay and allowances for five years, according to court documents.

It was unclear Wednesday where Jewell will serve his sentence. He must register as a sex offender once released from prison, according to court documents.

Less than a month before Jewell started his text messages, a Yokosuka-based USS Ronald Reagan sailor, Petty Officer 1st Class Gilbert Sandoval, 32, was convicted Aug. 16 of six sex crimes, including attempted sexual assault of a child.

Sandoval had sent explicit messages to an NCIS agent who made him believe she had a 7-year-old child whom he could rape. According to court testimony, he was arrested after going to an apartment intending to have sex with a 14-year-old girl with whom he'd sent explicit text messages. The recipient of those messages was actually an NCIS agent, and Sandoval was arrested.

He received a three-year prison sentence, a dishonorable discharge and a reduction to E-1.

Cmdr. Reann Mommsen, spokeswoman for Naval Force Japan, said the Navy is "committed to holding our personnel accountable for their actions and preserving good order and discipline throughout the Fleet."

"The U.S. Navy holds its personnel to the highest standards of conduct," she said.

[doornbos.caitlin@stripes.com](mailto:doornbos.caitlin@stripes.com) Twitter: @CaitlinDoornbos

# Survey: rise in sexual abuse, harassment of female cadets at Coast Guard Academy

By Ana Radelat

The Connecticut Mirror, March 4, 2019

Washington — Reports of unwanted sexual contact – behavior that ranges from unwanted touching to rape – from female cadets at New London’s Coast Guard Academy rose from 8 percent in 2016 to 12.4 percent last year.

And 45 percent of female cadets at the academy said they were sexual harassed last year, up from 36 percent in the previous report released in 2016.

Those were the preliminary results of the 2018 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey, which will be released in its final form in April.

The survey, conducted anonymously, found that gender discrimination at the Coast Guard Academy, which educates and trains about 1,000 cadets, rose from 11 percent in the 2016 report to 17 percent in the 2018 report.

“The results are alarming as this increased trend in unwanted sexual conduct, sexual harassment, and gender discrimination further jeopardizes the safety, well-being, and success of cadets,” said Cmdr. Edward Hernaez, the assistant commandant of cadets, in an e-mail to students detailing the results of the survey.

Sexual assaults and sexual harassment of male cadets also increased, with unwanted sexual contact increasing from 1 percent in 2016 to 3.6 percent in 2018.

The results of the Coast Guard Academy’s preliminary gender relations report is similar to the findings of similar surveys at the nation’s other military academies. The Pentagon [released a report](#) at the end of January that shows increases in sexual assaults and harassment at the other military academies, too.

The Pentagon said the number of reported sexual assaults increased from 43 to 48 at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point from between 2015 and 2018. Assaults also rose from 29 to 32 at the U.S. Naval Academy; and dipped slightly from 22 to 21 at the Air Force Academy.

Sexual harassment — against both men and women — also increased at West Point and the Naval Academy, and against men at the Air Force Academy. Women at the Air Force Academy said they experienced a slight dip in harassment.

Conducted every two years and submitted to Congress, the Pentagon surveys found that the number of students at the Army, Navy and Air Force academies who said they experienced unwanted sexual contact increased by nearly 50 percent over the 2016 report. More than half of the incidents involved alcohol.

But the Coast Guard Academy survey said that in 2018 there was “a decrease in alcohol use by either victim or offender at the time of the event.”

Some say the rise in the numbers of sexual assaults and harassment in the surveys are the result of a greater willingness of cadets to report the behavior.

“Yes, the increase in these percentages may be due to the fact that more people feel comfortable with reporting these sorts of offenses now than back in 2016, **but I know for certain** that unwanted sexual contact, harassment, and gender discrimination are still a problem here at the Coast Guard Academy and throughout the Coast Guard,” Hernaez said in his email to cadets (emphasis is his).

<https://ctmirror.org/2019/03/04/survey-rise-in-sexual-abuse-harassment-of-female-cadets-at-coast-guard-academy/>

### *A scathing indictment*

Hernaes also said most cadets believe that Coast Guard Academy senior leadership “make honest and reasonable efforts to stop unwanted sexual contact and sexual harassment.”

Cases of sexual assaults and sexual misconduct at the military service academies are reported up the chain of command and any punishment against perpetrators is meted out by the military.

Some victims of sexual assault say they are subject to retaliation, and that many sexual predators escape justice. Advocates for the victims, and a growing number of members of Congress, are calling for military prosecutors to handle sexual assault cases and if necessary, turn over all academy cases to the relevant civilian justice systems.

Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif., the head of a House Armed Services subcommittee that held a hearing last month on sexual assaults at the military academies, said the Pentagon report is “a scathing indictment of the academies’ culture, approach to prevention and response, and ability to hold violators to account.

“Academy leaders must promote a strong culture of dignity and respect, educate students on right and wrong, and have zero tolerance for violations,” Speier said. “The Superintendents have said they’re doing much of this, but the problem has gotten worse. Leaders must enforce this culture and earn students’ trust by making good on promises to impose severe penalties on predators.”

At that same hearing, Don Christensen, a retired Air Force officer and president of Protect our Defenders, a group working to end sexual assaults in the military, said he feared military leaders “do not understand the level of distrust many survivors have in the chain of command.”

“When I talk with academy survivors, the constant I hear is the fear of leadership –the fear leadership won’t believe them, the fear leadership will not hold the offender accountable, and the fear that leadership will drive them from the academies if they report,” Christensen said.

He also said 32 percent of the women at the Air Force Academy and 32 percent of the women at the Naval Academy don’t believe senior leadership “is making honest and reasonable efforts to stop sexual assault.”

Lawmakers are also investigating allegations of racial discrimination and harassment of minority cadets at the Coast Guard.

Last June, Reps. Joe Courtney, D-2<sup>nd</sup> District, Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., and Elijah Cummings, D-Md., requested the Coast Guard provide them with “all documents, including authority memoranda, investigative reports, panel sheets, final action memoranda and post-investigation talking points” regarding allegations of harassment or bullying made by any student or faculty member of the academy during the past three years. The lawmakers also asked to see the results of any investigations the Coast Guard conducted as a result of those allegations.

The lawmakers are still waiting for some of the information they have requested.

# ‘Whose Side Are You On?’: Harvard Dean Representing Weinstein Is Hit With Graffiti and Protests

By Jan Ransom and Michael Gold

The Washington Post, March 4, 2019



*Graffiti at Harvard University was aimed at Ronald S. Sullivan Jr., who is among the lawyers representing Harvey Weinstein against sexual assault charges. Mr. Sullivan is the first African-American to be appointed a faculty dean. (Credit: Shera Avi-Yonah/The Harvard Crimson)*

The graffiti showed up on the door of a Harvard University building last week: “Our rage is self-defense,” and “Whose side are you on?”

The unexpected target was Ronald S. Sullivan Jr., who is an accomplished lawyer, the director of Harvard’s criminal-law clinic and the first African-American to be appointed as a faculty dean.

Earlier this year, Mr. Sullivan joined a team of lawyers representing the Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein, who heads to trial in June in Manhattan on rape and related charges.

The move set off protests and intense debate at the Ivy League campus where a small, but vocal, group of students have called for his resignation as dean of Winthrop House, one of Harvard’s residential colleges for undergraduate students.

Some students said they did not believe Mr. Sullivan was fit to serve as a dean of a residential college and at the same time represent Mr. Weinstein, who has been accused by more than 80 women of sexual harassment and, in some cases, assault.

In his first public remarks, Mr. Sullivan said in a phone interview on Monday that he did not anticipate the level of backlash he has received. He has a long history of taking on high-profile and, at times, controversial clients, as well as representing students who have been victims of sexual assault, he said.

“Lawyers are not an extension of their clients,” Mr. Sullivan said. “Lawyers do law work, not the work of ideology. When I’m in my lawyer capacity, representing a client, even one publicly vilified, it doesn’t mean I’m supporting anything the client may have done.”

Some students disagree. Dozens of protesters, some with tape over their mouths, protested last month in front of the administration building, holding signs that said “Remove Sullivan” and “#MeToo.” About 270 people have signed [an online petition](#) calling for him to resign from his faculty dean position.

“Do you really want to one day accept your diploma from someone who for whatever reason, professional or personal, believes it is O.K. to defend such a prominent figure at the center of the #MeToo movement?” one student, Danu Mudannayake, wrote in the petition.

In the past week, the doors of Winthrop House were spray-painted with graffiti and had fliers posted on them that included an illustration of Mr. Sullivan that some students described as “racially insensitive.”

The fliers, which were also distributed throughout the campus, included images of Mr. Weinstein and Roland Fryer Jr., a Harvard economics professor who [has been accused of sexual harassment](#).

Protests regarding Mr. Sullivan’s representation of Mr. Weinstein have erupted at the college, and members of the Association of Black Harvard Women said in a public letter addressed to Mr. Sullivan: “You have failed us.”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/04/nyregion/harvard-dean-harvey-weinstein.html>

But many of Mr. Sullivan's colleagues have come to his defense. Dozens of law professors from the university on Feb. 14 sent a letter to the college in support of Mr. Sullivan. On Feb. 28, The Chronicle of Higher Education published an article by Randall Kennedy, a Harvard law professor, who wrote:

“Those calling for Sullivan's resignation or dismissal as a faculty dean solely because he is serving as Harvey Weinstein's lawyer in a rape prosecution are displaying an array of disturbingly widespread tendencies. One is impatience with drawing essential distinctions such as that between a lawyer and his client. Another is a willingness to minimize or dispense with important safeguards like fair trials. Yet another is a tendency to resort to demonization.”

The dean of Harvard College, Rakesh Khurana, said in a statement on Feb. 20 regarding Mr. Sullivan that the right to a vigorous defense is a cornerstone of the justice system. Yet he also announced last week that the college would conduct a “climate review” of how students at Winthrop House view Mr. Sullivan's representation of Mr. Weinstein and “take action as appropriate,” according to The Harvard Crimson.

“It is not lost on me that I'm the first African-American to hold this position,” Mr. Sullivan said. “Never in the history of the faculty dean position has the dean been subjected to a ‘climate review’ in the middle of some controversy.”

A spokeswoman for the university declined to comment.

Mr. Sullivan has had other controversial clients. He defended Aaron Hernandez, the former New England Patriots player, at his second murder trial, when he was acquitted of murdering two men in Boston. Mr. Sullivan also represented the family of Usaamah Rahim, a man shot by the Boston police who had been accused of being a terrorist.

Mr. Sullivan has largely built a career helping to overturn wrongful convictions and he also designed an indigent defense system in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina that resulted in the exoneration of thousands of people falsely convicted of crimes.

The Brooklyn district attorney's office tapped Mr. Sullivan in 2014 to design a conviction integrity unit to identify wrongfully convicted people that has become a national model. In 2017, he also helped the family of Michael Brown, a man killed by police in Missouri, obtain [a reported \\$1.5 million settlement](#) from the city of Ferguson after the family had filed a wrongful-death suit.

Ms. Mudannayake, a design editor at The Harvard Crimson, said that students' quarrel with Mr. Sullivan was not that he took on a controversial, high-profile client.

But Ms. Mudannayake said that faculty deans like Mr. Sullivan are responsible for setting the tone and culture in their houses, and students in Winthrop House felt that Mr. Sullivan's representation of Mr. Weinstein disrupted the safe atmosphere of their community.

“Everyone on this campus knows what #MeToo is and who Harvey Weinstein is,” she said. “And it's just shocking that it's been brought quite literally to some students' doorsteps.”

Mr. Sullivan wrote in an email to Winthrop students in January that all defendants, even the most disliked, have “basic due process rights.” On Monday, he said the students' concern was genuine, but misplaced.

Mr. Sullivan called the controversy “a teachable moment,” and expressed concern that the climate review could have a chilling effect on faculty who engage in work that may be unpopular.

One former student, whose name is being withheld because she is a survivor of sexual assault, said she had no problem with Mr. Sullivan representing Mr. Weinstein. Mr. Sullivan, she said, has been a staunch

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/04/nyregion/harvard-dean-harvey-weinstein.html>

advocate for victims and had represented her with her case. She said she had trusted only two people to tell about the attack, and one was Mr. Sullivan.

The woman, who went on to become a sex crimes prosecutor, said in an interview on Monday that one unfortunate effect of the #MeToo movement was a tendency for the public to rush to judgment when someone is accused of sexual assault without affording any sort of due process.

Diana L. Eck, a longtime faculty dean at Harvard, said that it seemed students in Winthrop House felt Mr. Sullivan's outside work as a defense lawyer was "fracturing that sense of community" and making it harder for students in Winthrop House to discuss sexual assault openly.

"There's nobody that would think that every single person doesn't deserve the best possible legal representation in court — of course we believe that," Ms. Eck said. "It's just, you know, to what extent does that commitment to legal representation in a very high-profile case like this collide with the responsibilities of being a community leader at Harvard?"