

JOINT RESOLUTION ON MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA

2021 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Angela Romero

Senate Sponsor: Luz Escamilla

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This resolution designates November 2021 as "Military Sexual Assault Survivors Month."

Highlighted Provisions:

This resolution:

- ▶ provides an overview of military sexual trauma statistics;
- ▶ designates November 2021 as "Military Sexual Assault Survivors Month" in Utah;

and

- ▶ honors the strength, resolve, and perseverance of sexual assault survivors serving in the military.

Special Clauses:

None

Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Defense's 2020 Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military (DOD report) revealed that an estimated 20,500 members of the United States Armed Forces, comprised of 13,000 women and 7,500 men, were victims of sexual assault in 2019, with 7,825 cases reported, which is a 3% increase over 2018;

WHEREAS, on average, according to the same 2020 report, only one out of every three sexual assault survivors in the armed forces come forward to report the assault;



28 WHEREAS, shame and stigma create a barrier to reporting sexual assault in the armed
29 forces;

30 WHEREAS, significant psychological impact due to the assault and resulting trauma
31 may cause survivors to leave military service early;

32 WHEREAS, women, who make up 20% of the armed forces, are the targets of 63% of
33 sexual assaults within the armed services;

34 WHEREAS, sexual assault within the armed forces is an issue for men who serve as
35 well, with 1 in 12 who report sexual harassment experiencing sexual assault;

36 WHEREAS, according to statistics cited in the DOD report, since 2004 the United
37 States Armed Forces has received 50,071 reports of sexual assault from male and female
38 service members for incidents that occurred during military service;

39 WHEREAS, sexual assault survivors in the armed forces have many of the same
40 reasons for deciding not to report sexual assault as sexual assault survivors outside of the
41 armed forces, including embarrassment, fear, and shame and the challenge of separating
42 professional and personal duties;

43 WHEREAS, according to the DOD report, sexual assault is a serious problem that can
44 have lasting, harmful effects on victims, military units, and international alliances;

45 WHEREAS, according to the DOD report, individuals who experience sexual assault
46 do not report their assault because they fear retaliation and the lack of confidentiality when
47 reported within the chain of command;

48 WHEREAS, according to the DOD report, 73% of the women and 44% of the men who
49 experienced sexual assault in the past year did not report it because they wanted to forget about
50 the event and move on;

51 WHEREAS, in addition, according to the DOD report, 61% of women and 41% of men
52 did not want more people to know about their sexual assault;

53 WHEREAS, the unique pressures of military life cause additional anxiety and stress to
54 military sexual assault survivors and can often cause complications in survivors' lives;

55 WHEREAS, each service member's and veteran's personal story underscores the need
56 for meaningful change to provide healing to those affected by sexual trauma through adequate
57 medical and mental health services;

58 WHEREAS, it is clear that much more must be done to combat sexual assault in the

59 armed forces;

60 WHEREAS, by highlighting this epidemic, Utah policymakers can seek to bring about
61 improved educational and preventative initiatives at a state level; and

62 WHEREAS, in the state of Utah, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, local
63 veterans' centers, and VA medical centers are able to offer resources for those individuals that
64 have survived sexual trauma in the military:

65 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah
66 designates November 2021 as "Military Sexual Assault Survivors Month" in Utah.

67 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature honor the strength, resolve, and
68 perseverance of sexual assault survivors within the military and work urgently to end sexual
69 violence in the United States Armed Forces.