

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 10, 2012

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John McCain
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Levin and Ranking Member McCain:

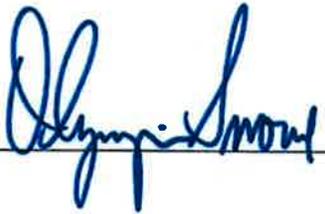
As work continues on the FY2013 National Defense Authorization Act, we write to urge you to retain several important, bipartisan amendments that were incorporated into the Senate-passed bill. As you know, sexual violence in the military continues to occur at an alarming rate, despite Secretary of Defense Panetta's serious commitment to fostering a zero tolerance policy. In 2011, more than 3,000 sexual assaults were reported in the military, although the Department of Defense's own estimates put the actual number of assaults at more than 19,000. We strongly support section numbers 527, 542, 544, 545, and 546 being included in the final bill:

- Sec.527, added as an amendment sponsored by Senator Barbara Boxer, prohibits the DOD from allowing any individual who has been convicted of a sexual offense to join the military.
- Sec.542, added as an amendment sponsored by Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, provides for the processing for administrative separation of those service members convicted of serious sexual offenses who are not punitively discharged in connection with their convictions.
- Sec.544, added as an amendment sponsored by Senator Amy Klobuchar, requires that DOD retain Restricted Reports on sexual assaults involving members of the Armed Forces for a minimum of 50 years. This will ensure that all veterans have long-term, private access to their medical forensic examination records for the purpose of filing VA disability claims.
- Sec.545, added as an amendment sponsored by Senator Klobuchar, requires the DOD to establish a policy on prevention and response to sexual harassment in addition to requiring the collection of records on sexual harassment.
- Sec.546, added as an amendment sponsored by Senator Klobuchar, expands the annual reports on sexual assaults involving members of the Armed Forces to collect critical data for identifying future pathways for preventing sexual assault in the military.

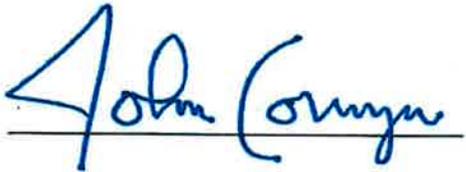
These common-sense amendments were agreed to with the overwhelming support of the Senate. Ensuring that these important pieces of legislation now become public law will represent a meaningful step towards protecting America's service members from the threat of sexual assault.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and for your continued service to our men and women in uniform.

Sincerely,



Susan M Collins





Kirsten E. Gillibrand

Barbara Noble