
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 189 Session of
2023

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

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS, AUGUST 29, 2023

A RESOLUTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

16 WHEREAS, Sexual assault in the military is not only a woman's
17 issue; and

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

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

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

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

14 WHEREAS, Survivors of military sexual assault often decide
15 not to report the assault for the reasons of embarrassment, fear
16 and shame and professional and personal implications; and

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

21 WHEREAS, The uniqueness of military life causes additional
22 anxiety to a sexual assault survivor and complicates the
23 survivor's life, which may result in lack of promotion or
24 removal from service; and

25 WHEREAS, The personal stories of survivors underscore the
26 need for meaningful change to provide healing to those affected
27 by military sexual assault trauma through adequate medical and
28 mental health services; and

29 WHEREAS, To highlight the epidemic of sexual assault in the
30 United States Armed Forces, policymakers should initiate an

1 examination of military culture and military justice at the
2 Statewide level; and

3 WHEREAS, In this Commonwealth, the Department of Military and
4 Veterans Affairs, local veterans' centers and United States
5 Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers are able to offer
6 resources for military sexual assault survivors; and

7 WHEREAS, The House of Representatives must honor the
8 strength, resolve and perseverance of military sexual assault
9 survivors and work urgently to end sexual violence in the
10 military throughout this Commonwealth; therefore be it

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