
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 359 Session of
2020

INTRODUCED BY MUTH, FARNESE, KEARNEY, COLLETT, FONTANA, COSTA,
HUGHES, BREWSTER, BROWNE, SANTARSIERO AND TARTAGLIONE,
SEPTEMBER 8, 2020

REFERRED TO VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS,
SEPTEMBER 8, 2020

A RESOLUTION

1 Designating the month of November 2020 as "Military Sexual
2 Assault Survivors Month" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, The United States Department of Defense's 2019
4 Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military (DOD REPORT)
5 revealed that an estimated 20,500 members of the United States
6 Armed Forces, comprised of 13,000 women and 7,500 men, were
7 victims of military sexual assault in 2018, with 7,825 cases
8 reported, which is a 3% increase over 2017; and

9 WHEREAS, On average, according to the same 2019 report, only
10 one out of every three military sexual assault survivors come
11 forward to report the assault; and

12 WHEREAS, Shame and stigma create a barrier to reporting
13 military sexual assault; and

14 WHEREAS, Significant psychological impact due to the assault
15 and resulting trauma may cause survivors to leave military
16 service early; and

17 WHEREAS, Women, who make up 20% of the United States Armed

1 Forces, are the targets of 63% of military sexual assaults and
2 military sexual assault is an issue for men who serve as well,
3 with 1 in 12 who report sexual harassment experiencing sexual
4 assault; and

5 WHEREAS, According to statistics cited in the DOD report,
6 since 2004 the United States Armed Forces has received 50,071
7 reports of sexual assault from male and female servicemembers
8 for incidents that occurred during military service; and

9 WHEREAS, Military sexual assault survivors face many of the
10 same reasons for deciding not to report sexual assault as
11 civilian sexual assault survivors, including embarrassment, fear
12 and shame and the challenge of separating professional and
13 personal duties; and

14 WHEREAS, According to the DOD report, sexual assault is a
15 serious problem that can have lasting, harmful effects on
16 victims, military units and international alliances; and

17 WHEREAS, According to the DOD report, individuals who
18 experience sexual assault do not report their assault because
19 they fear retaliation and confidentiality when reported to
20 command; and

21 WHEREAS, According to the DOD report, 73% of the women and
22 44% of the men who experienced sexual assault in the past year
23 did not report it because they wanted to forget about the event
24 and move on; and

25 WHEREAS, In addition, according to the DOD report, 61% of
26 women and 41% of men did not want more people to know about
27 their sexual assault; and

28 WHEREAS, The unique pressures of military life cause
29 additional anxiety and stress to military sexual assault
30 survivors and can often cause complications to survivors' lives;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, Each veteran's personal story underscores the need
3 for meaningful change to provide healing to those affected by
4 military sexual trauma through adequate medical and mental
5 health services; and

6 WHEREAS, By highlighting this epidemic, Pennsylvania
7 policymakers can learn the failures from the United States
8 Department of Defense's examination of military culture and
9 military justice to bring about improved educational and
10 preventative initiatives at a State level; and

11 WHEREAS, In addition, the United States Department of Defense
12 fails to take seriously the need to investigate and prosecute
13 perpetrators of sexual assault with only 2% of reports being
14 investigated; and

15 WHEREAS, In this Commonwealth, the Department of Military and
16 Veterans Affairs, local veterans' centers and VA medical centers
17 are able to offer resources for those individuals that survived
18 military sexual trauma; therefore be it

19 RESOLVED, That the Senate designate the month of November
20 2020 as "Military Sexual Assault Survivors Month" in
21 Pennsylvania; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That the Senate honor the strength, resolve and
23 perseverance of military sexual assault survivors and work
24 urgently to end sexual violence in the United States Armed
25 Forces.