

1 **JOINT RESOLUTION ON MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA**

2 2021 GENERAL SESSION

3 STATE OF UTAH

4 **Chief Sponsor: Angela Romero**

5 Senate Sponsor: Luz Escamilla

6

7 **LONG TITLE**

8 **General Description:**

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

11 **Highlighted Provisions:**

12 This resolution:

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

15 and

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

18 **Special Clauses:**

19 None

20

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

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

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



28 ~~Ê→ [WHEREAS, shame and stigma create a barrier to reporting sexual assault in the armed~~
 29 ~~forces;] ←Ê~~

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, Ê→ ~~[fear, and shame and the challenge of separating~~
 42 ~~professional and personal duties;] stigma, and fear of retaliation; ←Ê~~

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 ~~Ê→ [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;] ←Ê~~

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.

69a **H→ BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature recognize the efforts of the**
69b **Department of Defense to acknowledge the issue of sexual assault in the military and to**
69c **support those who have been victims of sexual assault. ←H**