

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 30, 2022

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III
Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

The Honorable Christine Wormuth
Secretary of the Army
United States Army
101 Army Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20310

The Honorable Carlos Del Toro
Secretary of the Navy
United States Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20350

The Honorable Frank Kendall
Secretary of the Air Force
United States Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20330

Dear Secretaries Austin, Wormuth, Del Toro, and Kendall:

We, the undersigned Members of Congress, are writing to request administrative changes by the Department of Defense (DOD) in the oversight and certification process of Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) instructors. As you are no doubt aware, the House Committee on Oversight and Reform recently wrote a letter requesting a report on DOD standard operating procedures regarding cases of sexual misconduct by JROTC instructors.¹ Given Congress' involvement with preventing military sexual misconduct over the last several years, this is an area of great concern to us.

In July 2022, the *New York Times* released an article illustrating the prevalence of sexual misconduct by instructors towards cadets enrolled in JROTC programs throughout the country.² The article states that currently, there are 7,497 JROTC instructors in the United States. Over the last 5 years, there have been 33 reported cases of sexual abuse by JROTC instructors which resulted in all 33 instructors being terminated and decertified, but only resulting in 14 arrests. Out of the 33 instructors charged with sexual misconduct, 7 of them had been accused of similar behavior in the past. This data shockingly indicates that 1 in every 232 JROTC instructors has been credibly accused of sexual misconduct with a student, which is a staggering 68% more frequently than their civilian high school teacher counterparts. It is incumbent upon JROTC instructors to be trustworthy and virtuous leaders for America's youth, and all too often, they have unfortunately betrayed that position of trust.

The frequency of instructor abuse towards the cadets under their supervision is unacceptable, and we fervently urge DOD to take the following measures to address this issue and prevent further misconduct:

- Create a national database controlled by the Department of Defense that tracks all cases of reported sexual abuse by JROTC instructors. The database should include the name, rank, branch of service, date

¹ Rep. Carolyn Maloney and Rep. Stephen Lynch, *Letter to the Department of Defense from the House Committee on Oversight and Reform and the Subcommittee on National Security on Sexual Misconduct in JROTC programs* (U.S. House of Representatives, August 15, 2022).

² Mike Baker, Nicholas Bogel-Burroughs, and Ilana Marcus, *'I Felt Trapped': Sexual Abuse of Teens in the Military's J.R.O.T.C. Program* (New York Times, July 9, 2022).

of infraction, state, school district, and the outcome of the case. This database should be referred to by school districts for all new hires of JROTC instructors.


- Create a regulation that requires schools to send at least 2 school-district approved adults along for all JROTC trips/activities outside of school hours to provide an extra layer of supervision for cadets.
- Create a brief training for cadets to take at the beginning of every JROTC program to show them what types of relationships and interactions are appropriate between instructors and cadets. The training should also include a list of resources available to cadets who need to report any form of misconduct in a safe and anonymous manner.
- Ensure there are trained professionals available on DOD sexual assault hotlines who are equipped to handle cases involving minors enrolled in JROTC programs.
- For all new JROTC instructors, DOD should require a favorable background check within the last 18 months to proceed in the application process, rather than referring to a favorable check within the last 5 years.
- Currently, under certain conditions, JROTC instructors can be granted interim certification to begin teaching if their application is administratively incomplete. DOD should change this regulation to not allow conditional employment of JROTC instructors until they have been fully certified, and their applications have been administratively approved.

Given the sensitive nature of this issue, we respectfully request a response from the recipients of this letter within 60 days or by December 2nd, 2022, regarding how DOD plans to address and implement these changes.


Sincerely,




Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



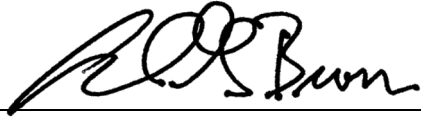
Jackie Speier
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs
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Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



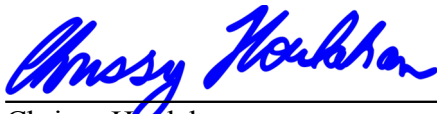
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Sheila Jackson Lee
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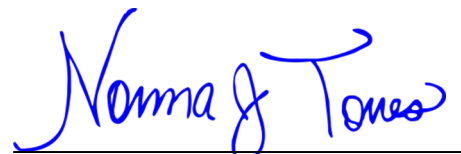
Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



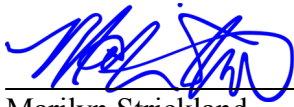
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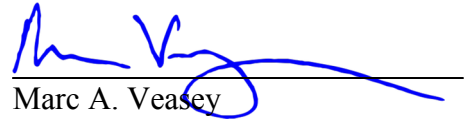
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Member of Congress



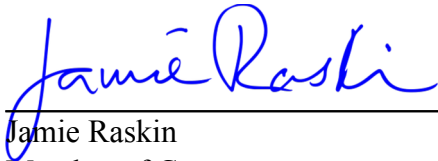
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Member of Congress



Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress



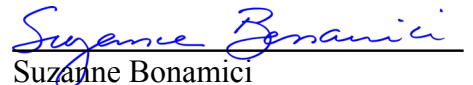
Jamie Raskin
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Seth Moulton
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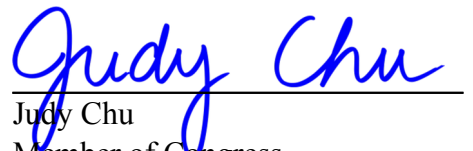
Lois Frankel
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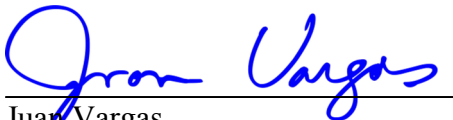
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Ed Case
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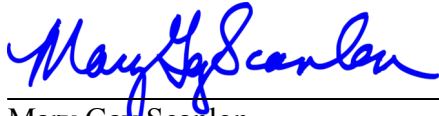
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



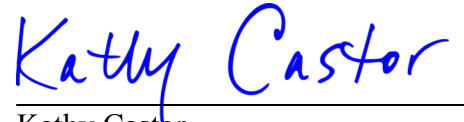
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Member of Congress



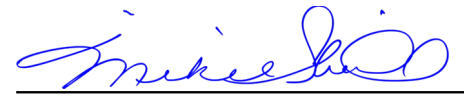
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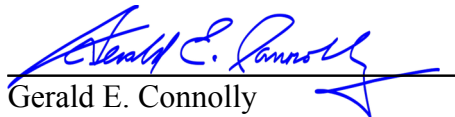
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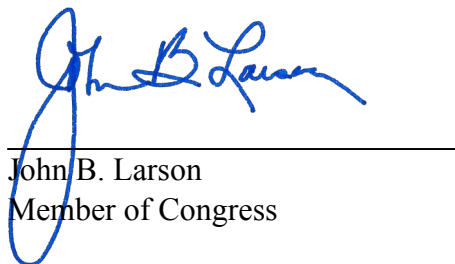
Madeleine Dean
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Member of Congress



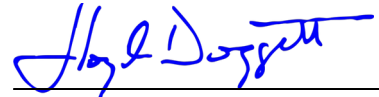
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