



Sexual Assaults: Expedited Transfer and Special Victims Counsel Program

February 3, 2016

Fiscal Year 2016 Report to Congress



Homeland
Security

United States Coast Guard

Foreword

February 3, 2016

I am pleased to present the following report, “Sexual Assaults: Expedited Transfer and Special Victims Counsel Program,” as prepared by the U.S. Coast Guard.

House Report 114-215 accompanying the *Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act* (P.L. 114-113) requires the Coast Guard to provide the number of requests for expedited transfer by victims of sexual assault and the number of service members served by its Special Victims Counsel program during FY 2015.



Pursuant to congressional requirements, this report is being provided to the following Members of Congress:

The Honorable John Carter
Chairman, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable John Hoeven
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

I am happy to answer any further questions you may have. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 372-4411 or the Department’s Deputy Under Secretary for Management and Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Chip Fulghum, at (202) 447-5751.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul F. Zukunft".

Paul F. Zukunft
Admiral, U. S. Coast Guard
Commandant



Sexual Assaults: Expedited Transfer and Special Victims Counsel Programs

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I. Legislative Language

This report responds to language in House Report 114-215 accompanying the *Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act* (P.L. 114-113).

House Report 114-215 includes the following requirement:

SEXUAL ASSAULT

The Committee directs the Coast Guard to continue to provide an annual report, due within 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, on the number of expedited requests for transfer made by victims of sexual assault during the prior fiscal year, including the number of applications denied and a description of the rationale for each denied request. The report shall also include the number of service members served by the Special Victim Counsel program.

II. Discussion

Sexual assault is a crime and is a violation of the Service's core values. The Coast Guard is making every effort to drive sexual assault from the Service. With consistent assessments and enhancements to our Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program, we will continue to hold offenders accountable and to offer professional and compassionate support for victims¹ while countering fears of stigma.

A. Expedited Transfer Requests by Victims of Sexual Assault

During FY 2015, the Coast Guard received 17 requests for expedited transfers. Sixteen requests were approved. One request was denied to allow for the completion of a medical evaluation to ensure that adequate medical care was provided to the member. The member was assigned to temporary duty in a safe location pending the outcome of the medical evaluation.

B. Service Members Served by the Special Victims Counsel Program

During FY 2015, the Coast Guard Special Victims Counsel (SVC) served 133 victims of sexual assault. This number included unrestricted and restricted reports. Of these 133 victims, 114 were service members. This indicates a significant increase in the percentage of SVC-eligible² victims making a request for an SVC. In FY 2014, 41 percent of sexual assault victims eligible for SVC representation asked for an SVC; whereas in FY 2015, 70 percent of sexual assault victims eligible for an SVC requested one.

¹ In this instance, the term victim applies to anyone who files an unrestricted report, whether the investigation has been completed or not.

² During FY 2015, Department of Homeland Security/Coast Guard civilian employees were not entitled to SVC representation; however, based on the FY 2016 National Defense Authorization Act, which extended SVC eligibility to Department of Defense civilian employees, the Coast Guard modified its policy to ensure that these individuals are eligible for SVC services.