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## News Release

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**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **DOD Task Force On Sexual Assault Submits Findings, Recommendations**

The DoD Task Force on Sexual Assault in the Military Services recently submitted its congressionally-mandated report to the secretary of defense. The report finds DoD has made progress in improving the response to victims' needs, but calls for DoD to do more to fully address the spectrum of sexual assault prevention and response.

"Our recommendations highlight the need for institutional change to more effectively prevent sexual assault and address related issues. Doing so is not only ethically and morally correct, but also essential to military readiness - all the more critical at this time," said Louis Iasiello, task force co-chairman.

The task force made a number of recommendations involving DoD's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, including: temporarily elevating oversight of this office to the jurisdiction of the deputy secretary of defense until the program meets established institutional goals; changing the budgeting process to overcome inconsistent funding among the military services; strengthening the policy and oversight functions of the office; calling for collaboration with the military services and national experts in sexual assault prevention to develop a comprehensive prevention strategy and a plan to routinely evaluate it; and more rigorous oversight of military service training programs.

The task force found DoD has made demonstrable progress in providing assistance to victims of sexual assault by offering restricted reporting, which permits a victim to obtain immediate care and counseling without engaging law enforcement and command authority.

The task force did recommend, however, that Congress should, as a permanent measure, enact a comprehensive military justice privilege for communications between a victim advocate and a victim of sexual assault.

Among the other recommendations:

- Ensure service members who report they were sexually assaulted are

afforded the assistance of a nationally certified victim advocate.

- Ensure victims understand their rights, including the opportunity to consult with legal counsel to minimize victim confusion during the investigative process.
- Improve medical care for victims of sexual assault, particularly those in deployed areas.
- Ensure gender-appropriate care for male victims.
- Inform victims and service members of disciplinary actions related to sexual assault.

The task force based its assessment on data collected over a 15-month period at 60 sites around the world. Task Force members spoke to more than 3,500 people, interviewing active duty and reserve component victims of sexual assault and other military personnel. During their assessment, they also interviewed general court-martial convening authorities, legal and investigative officials, senior policy officials, sexual assault response coordinators, and victim advocates.

A copy of the full report can be found at <http://www.dtic.mil/dtfsams/reports.html>. The secretary of defense has 90 days to review, comment on and submit the report to Congress.

For more information regarding this release, media may contact Col. Cora Jackson-Chandler, 703-325-6494.