

ENHANCED SERVICES FOR MILITARY VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Summary, January 2005

The reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA 2005) should incorporate the following measures:

Defense Commission on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

This provision would establish a commission of appointed military leaders and civilian experts to ensure implementation of recommendations from past and present task forces on domestic violence and sexual assault, especially recommendations that address confidential services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. The Commission would maintain collaboration between civilian authorities and military installations in responding to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking and facilitate coordination between Department of Defense and other federal agencies addressing violence against women. In addition, the Commission would supervise research, data, and evaluation activities, and review training and education programs. The Commission would also develop strategies for increasing community collaboration to enhance victim safety and services and to promote offender accountability.

Research, Data, and Evaluation

This provision would ensure that all research is reviewed by qualified military experts and civilian experts and published for accessibility. Research elements include: the capacity of military families and service members to access interventions, the efficacy of battered intervention programs,

Public Education and Prevention Campaign

The Department of Defense, in consultation with the Commission, the Office of Violence Against Women in the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services should ensure a comprehensive public education and prevention campaign to reduce the incidents of domestic violence and sexual assault and to ensure awareness of services for victims and consequences for offenders.

Crisis Intervention Services by Hotlines

The Department of Defense, in consultation with the Commission, would determine the appropriate contractual relationships with the National Domestic Violence Hotline, the RAINN and the American Women Overseas Hotline in order to support the availability of effective and anonymous or confidential information, referral and support for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program

The Department, in consultation with the Commission, should ensure the availability of Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) to respond to any sexual assault victim seeking medical services.

Victim Advocacy Program Development

The Department, in consultation with the Commission, shall ensure the implementation of the victim advocacy program to provide supportive, confidential services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, including service members and family members.