Military Sexual Assault Whistleblower Protection Bill Passes House

On June 27, the House approved, 423-0, a bill (H.R. 1864) to require investigations into allegations of retaliatory personnel actions when a service member reports incidents of military sexual assault.

Specifically, the bill, sponsored by Rep. Jackie Walorski (R-IN), would require the inspectors general of the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security to investigate allegations of retaliatory personnel actions taken in response to a service member making “protected communications” to an inspector general or a Member of Congress “regarding alleged instances of rape, sexual assault, or other forms of sexual misconduct in violation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.” The House version of the FY2014 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) (H.R. 1960) also includes this provision (see The Source, 6/14/13).

Speaking on behalf of the measure, Rep. Walorski said, “It is reported that 62 percent of the service members who experienced unwanted sexual contact felt as if they were being retaliated against in one form or another. This is completely unacceptable. Troops who have sacrificed so much for the cause of liberty should not be subject to reprisal after having just been subject to the emotional and physical pain of a sexual crime.”

Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA), a lead co-sponsor of the bill, added, “People have asked me: Why are you bringing this up as a stand-alone bill? My answer is that, last year, we finished and approved and got the NDAA signed on the 31st of December. This bill really cannot wait. We need it today in the military because the biggest problem we have with respect to sexual assault is that the victims – the people who are being harassed and assaulted – are being retaliated against in the workplace.”