

Sexual Assault Training Oversight and Prevention Act Summary

This legislation takes the reporting, oversight, investigation, and victim care of sexual assaults out of the hands of the normal chain of command and places jurisdiction in the hands of an autonomous Sexual Assault Oversight and Response Office. This Office will be comprised of civilian and military experts. The legislation also creates a sexual assault database within DoD that will be required to share information with DoJ civilian sexual offender database.

Establishment of a Sexual Assault Oversight and Response Office within the Department of Defense

All duties and staff focused on response to sexual assault that are now covered by the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office will be moved to the new Office.

The Office will:

- Work with various Military investigative organizations to investigate cases of sexual assault;
- Ensure that victims are given safety, security, and a place to communicate their experiences;
- Have the authority to reassign a victim to separate them from their assailant
- Create a new method of reporting sexual assault that takes it out of the hands of the normal chain of command;
- The Military Criminal Investigative Organizations will report directly to the Sexual Response Office; and
- Work with the different branches of the military to provide contact information for the Sexual Assault Grievance Board for offense reporting and written guidelines regarding who to contact including a direct telephone number.

Establishment of a Sexual Assault Oversight and Response Council in the Department of Defense

The Council will appoint personnel to the Sexual Assault Response Office, and advise the Office. The Secretary of Defense will appoint two members who must have served as military judges. The President will appoint one member from the Department of Justice, one member who has experience advocating for the rights of those sexually assaulted in the military, and one member who has expertise working on civilian cases of sexual assault. They will also report annually to Congress.

Establishment of a Director of Military Prosecutions

The Director will have final and independent authority to oversee the prosecution of all sexual-related offenses. They will also have the authority to request that a case be sent to an appellate court within the DoD or referred to the Department of Justice.

Removal of cases of sexual assault from the chain of command in the military

This provision explicitly takes control of sexual assault cases out of the hands of base commanders and places jurisdiction within the Sexual Assault Oversight and Response Office. This provision also takes away the possibility of non-judicial punishment or the consideration of service when looking at the perpetrator.

Sexual offender database

This provision directs the Department of Defense to collect and maintain information regarding sexual assaults in the U.S. Armed Forces. Upon a conviction of sexual assault this information will be sent to the Department of Justice to become a part of the National Sex Offender Registry.