

U.S. Sens. Baldwin, Tester and Gillibrand: Push administration to provide trauma services for victims of military sexual harassment

Posted on Monday, Mar 20, 2017

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin has joined Senators Jon Tester (D-MT) and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) as they lead a bipartisan call to urge top Administration Officials to offer critical support services to female service members who have recently become victims of military sexual harassment.

The Senators are pushing Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin, Marine Corps Commandant Lt. Gen. Robert Neller and Defense Secretary James Mattis to reach out to any service member or veteran who has had explicit photos publically posted without their consent. Reports surfaced recently that members of the U.S. Marine Corps have been posting nude photos of fellow female service members on an invite-only Facebook Group without their knowledge or consent.

“We take all military leadership at their word when they state that they will ensure survivors of military sexual trauma are provided the fullest range of support possible,” **the Senators wrote.** “Given the type of online harassment seen at Marines United and other webpages, we believe these incidents would clearly qualify a veteran or service member to receive services at a Vet Center.”

Services that are available to victims of military sexual trauma include chaplaincy

services, victim legal programs, equal opportunity advisers, and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response counselors.

In the letter, the Senators call on the Administration to make sure that these victims are notified of their eligibility for counseling and other support services at Vet Centers. These facilities are staffed by professionals with extensive experience and training in working with military sexual trauma survivors, and who can provide these services in a confidential setting off of a military base.

Cosigners of the letter also include Senators Jerry Moran (R-KS), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Tom Udall (D-NM), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Ed Markey (D-MA), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Al Franken (D-MN), Dean Heller (R-NV), Tom Carper (D-DE), Brian Schatz (D-HI) and Cory Booker (D-NJ).

Any service member or veteran who believes they might have been affected by this or any similar type of sexual harassment, trauma or assault can reach out to their state's [Military Sexual Trauma Coordinator](#), find resources online at the [Department of Defense's Safe Helpline](#) or call [877-995-5247](tel:877-995-5247).

The Senators' letter is [available here](#).