

Evers to release findings of investigation into National Guard's handling of sexual assault allegations

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Gov. Tony Evers notified legislative leaders he plans to soon publicly release details of an investigation into the Wisconsin National Guard's handling of sexual harassment and assault allegations.

In March, Evers and U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, called for the probe following complaints from Wisconsin Army and Air National Guard members that investigations had been mishandled and those who made allegations faced retribution.

Evers wrote the four leaders Thursday he was briefed on the findings Nov. 25 by the National Guard's Office of Complex Investigations and Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar is tentatively scheduled to receive details on Saturday. He then plans to release the findings publicly and invited the four leaders to be briefed on Monday due to the "gravity of the situation and the report's findings."

"I will also announce what steps I will take to address OCI's findings and ensure that our men and women in uniform work in an environment free from sexual assault, sexual harassment, and retaliation," Evers wrote in the letter.

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Evers wrote the review included canvassing some 1,600 personnel, including 78 in-depth interviews, along with reviewing more than 1,100 documents and visiting 10 military sites around Wisconsin.

Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald, a retired lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve, said Thursday he was shocked by media reports that OCI officials were “appalled” as they looked at the guard’s handling of sexual assault and harassment, saying Evers has a “duty to respond to this pressing matter.”

“It is the responsibility of the Department of Military Affairs to keep the brave men and women serving our state safe,” Fitzgerald said. “Clearly changes must be made.”

Read the letter:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/191205Letter.pdf>