

# U.S. Rep. Gallagher: Introduces SWOLE Act

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Reps. Mike Gallagher (R-WI) and Rob Wittman (R-VA) today introduced the Surface Warfare Officer Leadership Enhancement (SWOLE) Act, legislation that would improve Navy Readiness by addressing two areas of concern highlighted in a recent U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) [report](#). The report, released on June 17, was the result of the Navy's examination of two deadly collisions in 2017 and looked closely at the Surface Warfare Officers (SWOs) who command and operate the Navy's ships.

The report ultimately determined that 65% of SWOs believe specialized career paths would better prepare them for their duties, and that the Navy needed to address retention issues among female SWOs.

"Navy readiness starts with our ability to recruit and retain our country's best and brightest to serve as SWOs. But the Navy's struggle to retain female SWOs and lack of opportunities for career specialization have hurt our ability to achieve this goal," said Rep.

Gallagher. "This bill takes important steps to reverse these trends to ensure the Navy has the officers it needs to fight and win in the 21st century."

"The Surface Warfare Community is the backbone of America's fleet," said Rep.

Wittman. "But recent events and a Government Accountability Office report highlight the growing need to better develop talented Surface Warfare Officers through modernized career management practices, as well as to retain that talent through improved retention efforts. The SWOLE Act enacts both bold reforms and common-sense practices to solve key issues affecting the Surface Warfare Community and keep America's Navy the strongest in the world."

Specifically, the SWOLE Act would:

- Establish specialized career paths for Surface Warfare Officers (SWO's), as preferred by 65% of SWO's. In turn, this would eliminate the learning curves associated with billet rotations, as well as improve morale and retention.
- Conduct federal-funded research into SWO retention, with a particular emphasis on the factors causing retention shortfalls amongst female SWO's.
- Create a pathway for SWO's to obtain Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping (STCW) endorsements, allowing them to serve as Merchant Mariners should they decide to leave the Navy.

To read the bill text of the SWOLE Act, click [HERE](#).