

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 906

To expand and enhance programs and activities of the Department of Defense for prevention of and response to domestic abuse and child abuse and neglect among military families, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 23, 2021

Ms. SINEMA (for herself and Mr. CORNYN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To expand and enhance programs and activities of the Department of Defense for prevention of and response to domestic abuse and child abuse and neglect among military families, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Military Family Vio-

5 lence Prevention Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. REPORTS ON STAFFING LEVELS FOR THE FAMILY**
2 **ADVOCACY PROGRAMS.**

3 Not later than six months after the deployment of
4 the Military Community and Family Policy (MC&FP)
5 Family Advocacy Program Staffing Tool, and every year
6 thereafter, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to Con-
7 gress a report setting forth the following:

8 (1) Current staffing levels for the Family Advoca-
9 cy Programs (FAPs) of the Armed Forces at each
10 installation so staffed.

11 (2) Recommendations for ideal staffing levels
12 for the Family Advocacy Programs, as identified by
13 the staffing tool, set forth, at the election of the Sec-
14 retary, by Armed Force or by installation.

15 **SEC. 3. SHARING AMONG THE ARMED FORCES OF DATA ON**
16 **INCIDENTS REPORTED TO THE FAMILY AD-**
17 **VOCACY PROGRAMS.**

18 Commencing not later than one year after the date
19 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense
20 shall ensure that appropriate statistical data on incidents
21 reported to the Family Advocacy Programs (FAPs) of the
22 Armed Forces is shared among and across the Armed
23 Forces.

1 **SEC. 4. ENHANCEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR AWARENESS OF**
2 **MILITARY FAMILIES REGARDING FAMILY AD-**
3 **VOCACY PROGRAMS AND OTHER SIMILAR**
4 **SERVICES.**

5 (a) PILOT PROGRAM ON INFORMATION ON FAPS FOR
6 FAMILIES ENROLLING IN DEERS.—The Secretary of De-
7 fense shall carry out a pilot program to assess the feasi-
8 bility and advisability of various mechanisms to inform
9 families about the Family Advocacy Programs (FAPs) and
10 resiliency training of the Armed Forces during their en-
11 rollment in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting
12 System (DEERS). The matters assessed by the pilot pro-
13 gram shall include the following:

14 (1) An option for training of family members
15 on the Family Advocacy Programs.

16 (2) The provision to families of information on
17 the resources available through the Family Advocacy
18 Programs.

19 (3) The availability through the Family Advo-
20 cacy Programs of both restricting and unrestricted
21 reporting on incidents of domestic abuse.

22 (4) The provision to families of information on
23 the Military OneSource program of the Department
24 of Defense.

25 (5) The provision to families of information on
26 resources relating to domestic abuse and child abuse

1 and neglect that are available through local commu-
2 nity service organizations.

3 (6) The availability of the Military and Family
4 Life Counseling Program.

5 (b) OUTREACH ON FAP AND SIMILAR SERVICES FOR
6 MILITARY FAMILIES.—Each Secretary of a military de-
7 partment shall improve the information available to mili-
8 tary families under the jurisdiction of such Secretary that
9 are the victim of domestic abuse or child abuse and neglect
10 in order to provide such families with comprehensive infor-
11 mation on the services available to such families in connec-
12 tion with such violence and abuse and neglect. The infor-
13 mation so provided shall include a complete guide to the
14 following:

15 (1) The Family Advocacy Program of the
16 Armed Force or military department concerned.

17 (2) Military law enforcement services, including
18 the process following a report of an incidence of do-
19 mestic abuse or child abuse or neglect.

20 (3) Other applicable victim services.

1 **SEC. 5. DEFENSE DEPARTMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON**
2 **WOMEN IN THE SERVICES REPORT ON INI-**
3 **TIAL ENTRY POINTS FOR SUPPORT FOR MILI-**
4 **TARY FAMILIES IN CONNECTION WITH DO-**
5 **MESTIC ABUSE.**

6 Not later than one year after the date of the enact-
7 ment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit
8 to the congressional defense committees a report setting
9 forth the results of a study, conducted by the Defense De-
10 partment Advisory Committee on Women in the Services
11 (DACOWITS) for purposes of the report, on initial entry
12 points (including anonymous entry points) for use by
13 members of military families in seeking support for domes-
14 tic abuse or child abuse and neglect, including online chat
15 rooms and other support, text-based support, and applica-
16 tions on smartphones.

17 **SEC. 6. IMPROVEMENT OF COLLABORATION IN DOMESTIC**
18 **ABUSE PREVENTION SERVICES.**

19 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
20 date of the enactment of this Act, Department of Defense
21 Instruction 6400.01, relating to the Family Advocacy Pro-
22 gram (FAP) of the Department of Defense, shall be modi-
23 fied to enhance collaboration among the programs and
24 components specified in subsection (b) for the purpose of
25 leveraging the expertise and resources of such programs
26 and components to order to improve the availability and

1 scope of domestic abuse prevention services for military
2 families.

3 (b) PROGRAMS AND COMPONENTS.—The programs
4 and components specified in this subsection are the fol-
5 lowing:

6 (1) The Family Advocacy Program.

7 (2) The Sexual Assault Prevention and Re-
8 sponse Officer (SAPRO) of the Department of De-
9 fense.

10 (3) The Defense Suicide Prevention Office
11 (DSPO).

12 (4) The Defense Equal Opportunity Manage-
13 ment Institute (DEOMI).

14 (5) The TRICARE Management Activity
15 (TMA).

16 (6) The substance abuse prevention programs
17 and components of the Armed Forces.

18 (7) Such other programs and components of the
19 Department of Defense as the Secretary of Defense
20 considers appropriate.

1 **SEC. 7. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO AUTHORIZE EX-**
2 **CEPTIONAL ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTAIN BENE-**
3 **FITS TO DEPENDENTS OF MEMBERS OR**
4 **FORMER MEMBERS SEPARATED FOR DE-**
5 **PENDENT ABUSE.**

6 Section 1059(m)(4) of title 10, United States Code,
7 is amended by inserting “below the assistant Secretary
8 level. Any exercise of such delegated authority shall be re-
9 ported to the Secretary concerned on a quarterly basis”
10 after “may not be delegated”.

11 **SEC. 8. INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DE-**
12 **FENSE REPORT ON BEST PRACTICES IN PRE-**
13 **VENTION AND RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC**
14 **ABUSE AND CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**
15 **AMONG MILITARY FAMILIES.**

16 (a) **REPORT REQUIRED.**—Not later than 120 days
17 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Inspector
18 General of the Department of Defense shall submit to the
19 Secretary of Defense, and to the congressional defense
20 committees, a report on best practices among military in-
21 stallations in prevention and response to domestic abuse
22 and child abuse and neglect among military families.

23 (b) **ELEMENTS.**—The report required by subsection
24 (a) shall include the following:

25 (1) An identification and assessment of best
26 practices among military installations in prevention

1 and response to domestic abuse and child abuse and
2 neglect among military families in connection with
3 the following:

4 (A) Installation leadership.

5 (B) Communication between the Family
6 Advocacy Program and the installation com-
7 mand team.

8 (C) Elimination of or reduction in barriers
9 to effective incident response.

10 (2) Recommendations for mechanisms, at the
11 installation, Armed Force, and military department
12 level, to identify and assess lessons learned through
13 programs, projects, and activities for prevention and
14 response to domestic abuse and child abuse and ne-
15 glect among military families.

16 (3) An identification and assessment of re-
17 sources in communities surrounding military instal-
18 lations that could assist in prevention and response
19 to domestic abuse and child abuse and neglect
20 among military families.

21 (4) An assessment of the benefits of
22 bidirectional relationships involving the community
23 resources identified pursuant to paragraph (3).

24 (5) Recommendations for memoranda of under-
25 standing, or other formal relationships, between in-

1 stallations and surrounding communities on the
2 shared use of resources identified pursuant to para-
3 graph (3), including recommendations on mecha-
4 nisms for expediting entry into such memoranda of
5 understanding.

6 (6) Such other matters regarding best practices
7 among military installations in prevention and re-
8 sponse to domestic abuse and child abuse and ne-
9 glect among military families as the Inspector Gen-
10 eral considers appropriate.

11 (c) **GUIDANCE AUTHORIZED IN LIGHT OF REPORT.**—
12 Each Secretary of a military department may issue guid-
13 ance for commanders of installations under the jurisdic-
14 tion of such Secretary on best practices in prevention and
15 response to domestic abuse and child abuse and neglect
16 among military families at such installations in light of
17 the matters included in the report of the Inspector General
18 under subsection (a).

19 **SEC. 9. CONGRESSIONAL DEFENSE COMMITTEES DEFINED.**

20 In this Act, the term “congressional defense commit-
21 tees” has the meaning given that term in section
22 101(a)(16) of title 10, United States Code.

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