

throughout all branches of the military. In March 2007, the Department of Defense (DoD) released their third annual sexual assault report, which stated that there were 2,947 allegations of sexual assaults reported in 2006; a 24 percent increase from 2005. In 2004, the DoD reported 9,000 incidents of spousal abuse. A 2005 Sexual Harassment and Assault Survey of the Service Academies found 6 percent of females and 1 percent of males said they were sexually assaulted in 2004–2005, and less than half the females who experienced sexual assault reported it. In this same survey, 60 percent of female cadets indicated sexual harassment was about the same as when they first enrolled at their academy.

While the DoD has been making efforts to improve its prevention and response to domestic and sexual violence, victim services remain incomplete and inconsistent among the various branches. There have been reports that victims advocates, charged with protecting the victim's rights, have been denied resources to do their job, and in some instances been forced off the base altogether. Furthermore, DoD policies are not codified in the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and do not offer the same level of rights and protections afforded to civilian victims. Perhaps most importantly, victims are unable to seek confidential counseling and treatment without fear that their records might become public if they press charges against their assailant.

My bill, the Military Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Act, seeks to bring military law up to par with civilian laws by establishing a comprehensive approach for the military to address domestic violence and sexual assault among our soldiers. Specifically, this bill will:

Establish an Office of Victims Advocate (OVA) within DoD, bring the Family Advocacy Program under OVA, and create a Director of OVA to oversee and coordinate efforts to prevent and respond to cases of family violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking with the military and among military families;

Codify rights, restitution policies, treatment and other services for victims within the UCMJ, including creating comprehensive confidentiality protocols to protect the rights of victims within military law;

Strengthen policies for reporting, prosecuting and treating perpetrators of violence;

Create counseling and treatment programs through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The military should be at the forefront of prosecuting assailants and setting the highest standards for treatment of service men and women, or military family members, victimized by sexual assault and domestic violence. Our Armed Forces must be able to guarantee the most basic protections to ensure these victims can receive necessary counseling, treatment, and justice.

If a victim cannot access essential care for fear of stigma, threats to their career, or because they just do not know what resources are available, the military will continue to lose valuable female and male soldiers. These men and women who serve our country in uniform put themselves in harm's way to protect our Nation from threats at home and abroad. They deserve the same rights and protections as the civilians whose freedoms they protect. My bill ensures service members are adequately protected when dealing with the horrible tragedy of sexual assault or domestic violence.

Do not allow our brave service members to be victimized twice, once by their perpetrator and then again by the military's lack of appropriate, compassionate, and confidential treatment and response.

Madam Speaker, I encourage all Members to join me in cosponsoring the Military Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Act.

IN HONOR OF THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF ST. STEPANOS ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH, ELBERON, NJ

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 29, 2007

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the 20th anniversary of St. Stepanos Armenian Apostolic Church. St. Stepanos is across the street from my home in Elberon, New Jersey. It is a daily reminder to me of Armenian heritage and culture.

St. Stepanos is also named in honor of the patriarch of the Hovnanian family, who has contributed so much to my district and the goal of affordable housing across the Nation. The Hovnanian family is the main benefactor of the church and many of its activities.

St. Stepanos Church was consecrated in 1987. It sits on the site of St. Mary's Armenian Church, which served as the religious and cultural center for the Armenian community of the Jersey Shore for much of the 20th Century.

St. Stepanos is one of the most beautiful examples of Armenian architecture in the United States. One can easily feel that you are in Armenia by standing in front of it, or inside the sanctuary. On the 10th anniversary of its consecration, the church added an Armenian khachkars, a traditional ancient art form in which a cross is intricately carved out of stone, to further enhance its architectural splendor.

The Armenian School is an integral part of the St. Stepanos community, focusing on the study of Armenian language and culture, with participants ranging from age 4 to adult. Sunday school promotes St. Stepanos emphasis on religion within the Armenian community in Central New Jersey.

The Women's Guild organizes fundraisers, dinners, and cultural activities. It has become increasingly important in promoting a sense of community at St. Stepanos. The church's youth organization also hosts fundraisers and trips for the younger Armenian population at St. Stepanos. The activities hosted by the church in addition to its commitment to religion and culture only serve as further proof of the active role that St. Stepanos Armenian Apostolic Church has taken in the community throughout the years.

Madam Speaker, we are honored in New Jersey on the 20th anniversary of St. Stepanos to receive Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, his Holiness Karekin II, from St. Etchmiadzin, Armenia. St. Stepanos has received many Armenian prelates over the years including the Patriarch of Jerusalem on its 10th anniversary, but this is the first time the head of the Armenian Church has visited.

I sincerely hope that my colleagues will join me in celebrating the 20th anniversary of St.

Stepanos Church for its contributions to the Armenian-American residents of Central New Jersey, as well the larger Armenian-American community in the United States.

IN RECOGNITION OF MAJOR GENERAL ROBERT W. MIXON

HON. DOUG LAMBORN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 29, 2007

Mr. LAMBORN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my sincere gratitude for Major General Robert W. Mixon's service to Fort Carson as Commanding General of Division West, First Army and previously as Commander of the 7th Infantry Division.

Before coming to Fort Carson, Major General Mixon, a 1974 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, served as Deputy Director and Chief of Staff for Futures Center at the United States Army Training and Doctrine Command at Fort Monroe, Virginia. He was also the Deputy Commanding General, Assistant Commandant, and Director of the Unit of Action Maneuver Battle Lab at Fort Knox as well as the Assistant Division Commander 4th Infantry Division at Fort Hood.

Major General Mixon, an Armor Officer, has served in numerous capacities at the operations, planning and training levels including as Command of L Troop, 3rd Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment at Bad Hersfeld, Germany, Command of 2nd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment at Fort Bliss, Texas, and as Command of the 1st Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, Republic of Korea.

A distinguished graduate of the War College, Major General Mixon also holds a Masters of Arts in History from Rice University and was an Assistant Professor of History at West Point from 1982 until 1985.

As Major General Mixon prepares to retire from the U.S. Army, he departs with an impeccable record of nobility and leadership of the utmost distinction. Soldiers who served under his command will always remember him to be a soldier's general. I would like to offer my sincere appreciation for his commitment to defending our country and the invaluable contributions he has made to Fort Carson.

CONGRATULATING CRIDER HEALTH CENTER

HON. W. TODD AKIN

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 29, 2007

Mr. AKIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Crider Health Center, located in St. Charles, Missouri. Recently, the Department of Health & Human Services announced that Crider Health Center's application to become a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) was approved.

For the past 27 years, the Crider Health Center has provided mental health treatment and services for underinsured and uninsured adults, children and families affected by persistent mental illness and serious emotional disorders. Since its inception, the Center has notably expanded its service programs to