
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 924 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY MUTH, L. WILLIAMS, TARTAGLIONE, HAYWOOD, HUGHES,
KEARNEY, COMITTA, CAPPELLETTI, KANE, FONTANA, COLLETT AND
SANTARSIERO, SEPTEMBER 19, 2023

REFERRED TO VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS,
SEPTEMBER 19, 2023

AN ACT

1 Amending Title 38 (Holidays and Observances) of the Pennsylvania
2 Consolidated Statutes, in veteran recognition, providing for
3 Military Sexual Trauma Awareness Day.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Title 38 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated
7 Statutes is amended by adding a section to read:

8 § 1306. Military Sexual Trauma Awareness Day.

9 (a) Legislative findings and declarations.--The General
10 Assembly finds and declares as follows:

11 (1) This Commonwealth must raise awareness of military
12 sexual trauma and the resources available through the
13 Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the United
14 States Department of Veterans Affairs for survivors of
15 military sexual trauma.

16 (2) According to statistics from the United States
17 Department of Veterans Affairs, one in three women and one in

1 50 men report experiencing sexual harassment or sexual
2 assault during military service when asked by a United States
3 Department of Veterans Affairs health care provider.

4 (3) Any individual in the military can experience
5 military sexual assault, regardless of the individual's age,
6 race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical
7 abilities or branch of service.

8 (4) Military sexual trauma can occur at any time or
9 place during military service, whether on or off duty and on
10 or off base.

11 (5) The psychological impact of military sexual trauma
12 and the resulting trauma can push survivors out of military
13 service and lead to tremendous difficulty readjusting to
14 their civilian lives.

15 (6) The United States Department of Defense Annual
16 Report on Sexual Assault in the Military, Fiscal Year 2021,
17 revealed in stark detail that sexual assault and sexual
18 harassment remain persistent and distressing problems in the
19 military.

20 (7) Service member sexual assault reports increased by
21 13% in 2021, compared to the 2020 report.

22 (8) Shame and stigma create a barrier to reporting
23 sexual assault.

24 (9) On average, only one out of every three sexual
25 assault survivors come forward to report the assault.

26 (10) Even though women make up only 20% of the United
27 States Armed Forces members, they are the target of 63% of
28 sexual assaults.

29 (11) Sexual assault in the military is not only a
30 women's issue, and more than 100,000 men have been sexually

1 assaulted in the military in recent decades.

2 (12) In today's military, military sexual assault
3 survivors are often forgotten and often decide not to report
4 the assault for the reasons of embarrassment, fear and shame
5 and professional and personal implications.

6 (13) The military's culture of duty, teamwork, strength
7 and accomplishment conflicts with military sexual assault
8 survivors' needs, resulting in the sexual survivors being
9 stigmatized as weak or failing fellow service members.

10 (14) The uniqueness of military life causes additional
11 anxiety to a sexual assault survivor and complicates the
12 survivor's life, which may result in lack of promotion or
13 removal from service.

14 (15) The personal stories of survivors underscore the
15 need for meaningful change to provide healing to those
16 affected by military sexual assault trauma through adequate
17 medical and mental health services.

18 (b) Designation.--November 9 of each year is designated as
19 Military Sexual Trauma Awareness Day.

20 (c) Proclamation.--The Governor shall issue annually a
21 proclamation encouraging residents of this Commonwealth to
22 observe Military Sexual Trauma Awareness Day, honor the
23 strength, resolve and perseverance of military sexual assault
24 survivors and work urgently to end sexual violence in the
25 military.

26 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.