

March 15, 2017

The Honorable Andy Barr  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representative Barr:

The Reserve Officers Association of the United States supports the “Military Sexual Assault Victims Empowerment Act” to amend Public Law 113-146 by adding private treatment of veterans who are victims of military sexual assault. Sexual assault is not just a problem for the Active Components. The results of the 2015 Military Investigation and Justice Experience Survey study included Reserve Component members who experienced sexual assault when on active duty orders.

In fiscal year 2015 the military services received 6,083 reports of sexual assault involving service members as either victims or subjects according to the *Department of Defense Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military Fiscal Year 2015* provided to Congress on May 2, 2016. The report also acknowledged, “We know that sexual assault in both the U.S. and military populations occurs much more often than is reported to authorities.”

The Department of Veterans Affairs provides counseling for Military Sexual Trauma, however this can be difficult to obtain because the Veterans Health Administration reports that Psychologist rank in the top ten critical occupations (fiscal years 2011 to 2015). Since this critical occupation is also addressing the rise in PTSD this bill can clearly resolve the shortage issue and help many servicemembers who may not be able to receive counseling in the VA.

ROA has a membership of 50,000 and is the only national military association that exclusively supports all the uniformed reserve components of the United States. Thank you for your efforts on this issue, and your support of our veterans. Please have your staff call Susan Lukas, ROA’s legislative director, at 202-646-7713 or e-mail at [slukas@roa.org](mailto:slukas@roa.org) with any question or issue you would like to discuss.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey E. Phillips  
Maj. Gen., USA (Ret.)  
Executive Director