



# Sexual Assaults: Expedited Transfer and Special Victims Counsel Program

*June 22, 2015*

Fiscal Year 2015 Report to Congress



Homeland  
Security

*U. S. Coast Guard*

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# Foreword

The Coast Guard presents the following report, “Sexual Assaults: Expedited Transfer and Special Victims Counsel Program,” as prepared by the U.S. Coast Guard.

This document has been compiled pursuant to a requirement set out in House Report 113-481 to accompany the *Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2015*. This document describes the number of requests for expedited transfer by victims of sexual assault and the number of service members served by its Special Victims Counsel program in the previous fiscal year.



Pursuant to Congressional requirements, this report is being provided to the following members of Congress:

The Honorable John R. Carter  
Chairman, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard  
Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable John Hoeven  
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen  
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security.

I am happy to answer any further questions you may have. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 372-4411 or the Department’s Chief Financial Officer, Chip Fulghum, at (202) 447-5751.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul F. Zukunft". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paul F. Zukunft  
Admiral, U. S. Coast Guard  
Commandant



# Sexual Assaults: Expedited Transfer and Special Victims Counsel Programs

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# I. Legislative Language

This report responds to the language set out in Senate Report 113-198 to accompany the *Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2015*, includes the following requirement.

## **SEXUAL ASSAULT**

The Committee is concerned about sexual assault within the Coast Guard. The Committee directs the Coast Guard, not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, to report the number of requests for expedited transfer by victims of sexual assault, the number of applications denied, and, for each application denied, a description of the reasons why such application was denied. Additionally, the Committee directs the Coast Guard to report on the number of service members served by its Special Victims Counsel program in the previous fiscal year.

## II. Report

Sexual assault is a crime and is a violation of the Service's core values. The Coast Guard is making every effort to drive sexual assault from the Service. With consistent assessments and enhancements to our Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program, we will continue to hold offenders accountable and offer professional and compassionate support for victims<sup>1</sup> while countering fears of stigma.

### **A. Expedited Transfer Requests by Victims of Sexual Assault**

The Sexual Assault Prevention Council chartered the Victim Response and Recovery Care Committee in February 2014 to review current service delivery to victims, and to offer recommendations to enhance comprehensive victim-centered support, both initially and as needed during recovery to best facilitate a victim's return to wellness. The Coast Guard's Office of Military Personnel released updated policy on expedited transfers for victims of sexual assault on August 29, 2014, ensuring compliance with the requirements established in the *National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2014*.

During FY 2014, the Coast Guard received 19 requests for expedited transfer. Two of the 19 requests were received after the August 2014 policy update. Eighteen transfer requests were approved and one was disapproved. The victim who had their transfer request denied, which occurred prior to the issuance of the updated policy, had already been issued Temporary Duty Orders to remove the victim from the unit to a location that the member had requested.

### **B. Service Members Served by the Special Victims Counsel Program**

Established in July 2013, the Coast Guard Special Victims Counsel program continued its efforts during FY 2014 to build a cadre of trained, qualified staff judge advocates to serve as Special Victims Counsel to victims requesting their services. A Special Victims Counsel provides legal assistance to victims in a confidential attorney-client privilege relationship throughout the investigation and any related proceedings, and are also trained as Victim Advocates.

During FY 2014, 99 referrals were requested for the assignment of a Special Victims Counsel to victims of sexual assault in the Coast Guard.

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<sup>1</sup> The term victim applies to anyone who files an unrestricted report, whether the investigation has been completed or not.