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STEVE BUYER

326 Cannon Office Building • Washington, DC 20515 • (202) 225-5037



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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CONTACT: Maureen Cragin

Ryan Vaart

(202) 225-2539

**OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN BUYER  
MILITARY PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING  
KASSEBAUM BAKER REPORT**

*March 17, 1998*

Today the Subcommittee will receive testimony on the findings and recommendations of the Federal Advisory Committee on Gender-Integrated Training and Related Issues – more commonly referred to as the Kassebaum Baker Committee. We'll also hear from each of the military services on the results of their review of these findings, as well as any changes they plan to make based on the committee's recommendations, and we'll learn more details about the Secretary of Defense's directive to the service based on their responses to the recommendations, which he announced yesterday.

In late 1996, in response to allegations of widespread sexual misconduct involving Army drill sergeants and cadre members at Aberdeen, Maryland, as well as allegations at other Army training centers, this subcommittee undertook a comprehensive, bi-partisan investigation of sexual misconduct in the training centers of each of the military services.

In addition to visiting the basic training programs of each of the services, we received numerous briefings on issues ranging from military criminal investigative procedures to the military justice system; visited several other military installations around the world; conducted a hearing on the Army's investigations into sexual misconduct in the service; and issued an interim report on the Committee's investigation.

One thing our efforts clearly revealed was that the issue of sexual misconduct at military training centers is a very complex one with numerous contributing factors. In many ways, problems of sexual misconduct appeared to be symptomatic of bigger illnesses in military training.

*District Offices:*

120 East Mulberry Street, Room 106 • Kokomo, Indiana 46901 • (317) 454-7551  
204A North Main Street • Monticello, IN 47960 • (219) 583-9819

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We heard complaints about a lack of rigor in basic training; shortages of drill sergeants and cadre members; problems with the drill sergeant selection and training process; concerns about separate, less-difficult standards for female recruits; problems with the recruiting process; and concerns about false accusations of sexual misconduct and anonymous “drop boxes” that facilitated such allegations. To be perfectly honest, what we saw and heard was rather disconcerting. Our investigation made it clear that there are some major problems in basic training.

As a result of this review, the Military Personnel Subcommittee included several provisions in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1998 that were designed to address the findings and concerns raised during our investigation. One such provision required the establishment of an independent panel of experts to review the basic training programs of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines, and to make recommendations for improvements to these programs.

Shortly after the subcommittee completed its mark up of the Defense Authorization Act in early June, Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen announced three initiatives to maintain the effectiveness and readiness of U.S. military forces, and to ensure that policies governing good order and discipline were clear and fair. He announced the creation of a task force to review policies and practices relating to good order and discipline, including those relating to fraternization; he instructed the DOD General Counsel to review the clarity of existing guidance on adultery under the Uniform Code of Military Justice; and he announced the creation of an independent panel of private citizens to review gender integrated training and related issues in the services, and to recommend changes or improvements to ensure the readiness and effectiveness of the all-volunteer force.

The composition of the panel, formally known as the Federal Advisory Committee on Gender Integrated Training and Related Issues, was announced in late June, with former Senator Nancy Kassebaum Baker appointed as the committee’s chair. The committee visited 17 military sites, including the major training centers of each of the services, and conducted discussion groups with recruits, instructors, recruiters, support group personnel and members of the chain of command.

While there has been no word on the status of the fraternization and adultery reviews, the Kassebaum Baker Committee concluded its work in December 1997, and issued a report of its findings along with 30 recommendations to the Secretary of Defense. Many of these findings are consistent with the findings of this committee’s own review – that the drill sergeant selection and training process needs to be overhauled; that the physical condition and training of recruits needs to be improved; and that recruiting reforms are necessary.

Despite the fact that the Federal Advisory Committee’s report contained numerous substantial recommendations for improvements in military initial-entry training, most of the public and media attention on the report has focused almost exclusively on two specific recommendations – that the services provide separate barracks for male and female recruits, and that they separate recruits at the small-unit level while continuing gender-integrated training above this unit level.

However, there has been very little public discussion on the Committee's rationale for making these recommendations. In contrast to service claims that integrated training improved the ability of men and women to work as a team, the Kassebaum Baker Committee observed that gender-integration at the operational training unit level is causing confusion and a less cohesive environment. Additionally, the use of "no-talk, no touch" doctrine to ensure disciplined behavior works against the goal of teaching male and female recruits how to work together from the beginning of their training.

The purpose of this hearing today is to help us gain a better understanding of how the Federal Advisory Committee arrived at its 30 recommendations, as well as to hear the reaction of each of the military services to these recommendations. Additionally, we'll learn more about Secretary Cohen's announcement yesterday regarding additional actions he has directed the services to take in three areas of basic training – training rigor, leadership and billeting.