



Remarks by Brian Lewis, Navy Veteran
Lackland Abuse Scandal and Congressional Hearing
Press Conference, Rayburn House Office Building- January 23, 2013

Hello, my name is Brian Lewis. I'm a veteran of the Navy, a sexual assault survivor and Protect Our Defenders Advocacy Board Member.

For the past several months, Protect our Defender's has had constructive conversations with the House Armed Services Committee staff regarding a number of issues including our proposal to establish a commission to modernize the UCMJ pertaining to sexual assault and related issues. A version of it was enacted in the fiscal year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act and signed into law. And we look forward to continuing to work with the committee.

In September, Chairman McKeon also promised he would hold (quote) "open and complete" hearings into the scandal at Lackland as a result of the Protect Our Defenders petition we delivered to him nearly 6 months ago.

However, the hearing taking place today falls far short of that commitment.

Recently, we learned that three male airmen are also victims of the scandal at Lackland. This comes as no surprise, because the DoD's own data states that out of the estimated 19,000 sexual assault victims every year in the military, over 10,000 are men. This means approximately 56% of victims every year are men. Their voices are not being heard today because our request to expand the hearing panel to include male voices was denied.

The issue of male rape in the military must be brought out into the open. There is much work to be done. And we will continue to fight for justice for male victims and survivors. We applaud and support Advocacy Board member, Geri Lynn Matthews who is the wife of rape survivor, Michael Matthews who was featured in the "Invisible War" and director, Michael Miller are working hard to insure our voices are heard. Their film, "Justice Denied" will bring more attention to male survivors who, for far too long have been denied a voice.

We hope that this is the beginning of the Lackland investigation and the serious reform we have been promised and not just another footnote in the sad history of our elected leaders ignoring their responsibility to honor and protect our men and women in uniform.