

The DoD Times (Redacted)



Why America's Daughters Are No Longer Serving

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In March 2022, I presented a [report to the House Intelligence Committee](#) on the unchecked abuses occurring in the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). That report was the impetus for pointed legislation later that year in the National Defense Authorization Act, calling on the leadership of DIA to address “an environment permissive of management abuses.” That summer, the then-director LTG Scott Berrier held an all-call and addressed all military members of the Agency. In a [recently-released transcript of that address](#), Berrier stood up and attributed all the issues to “one Air Force officer”, me. It was not only a blatant act of slander (since he had been handed the report months prior citing the dozens of witnesses that had come forward), but it was also a message to those who had reported allegations of reprisal, retaliation, discrimination, and workplace abuse: if you speak up, you will be targeted.

When I read the transcript of the “Town Hall” I was incensed. Berrier’s stunt was not only a clear act of retaliation, but also a message to future would-be whistleblowers: if you speak out, the institution’s leadership will make examples out of you. I promptly filed two Inspector General and Equal Opportunity complaints, citing Restriction and retaliation respectively. The EO complaint was subsequently punted around to no fewer than seven entities before flying off into the ether. After 4+ months of watching the complaint being passed from one incompetent authority to another, I contacted my representative, Sean Casten. Below is the letter I wrote:

Dear Representative Casten,

Thank you for advocating for mental health reform in our government and for your staff’s intervention in my Equal Opportunity complaint.

My daughter, a college sophomore honors student and 16-year military “brat,” recently asked me what I thought of her potentially serving in the military.

My response was simply this: **“You deserve better.”**

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Sir,

Today marks 150 days since my Equal Opportunity (EO) complaint from 21 February 2024 was filed. Despite the military levying a 45-day requirement on me to submit my complaint, the case, filed over 4 months ago, has not even been opened yet for formal investigation. Over thirty years of “attention” and “training” within the DoD and our military’s EO system still cannot, in the span of 4+ months, even figure out something as rudimentary as who the investigating authority is for a case (this specific complaint having been punted to no fewer than 7 different Agencies, all of whom alleged they were not responsible for investigating the case).

How sad, really.

If there is any wonder why the sons, and especially daughters, of America aren’t showing up to the recruiting stations (to include now mine) any longer, please allow me to remove it here. I can’t imagine being a young Service member in the military today; being discriminated against, abused, and harassed with impunity and trying to seek justice / protection in a system as inept and dysfunctional as this one. I can’t imagine the emotional and psychological harm that our young Service members endure because our EO “professionals” still, after 3+ decades of alleged reforms, can’t even get the simplest things right - like get a complaint to the responsible and competent investigating authority in a timely fashion. I can’t imagine being made to remain in the same caustic workplace with my abusers for months on end, likely being continuously and/or retributively targeted, while our military systems of redress falter and fail again and again. The moral injury and subsequent mental health impact our young brothers- and sisters-in-arms in these instances suffer, because our systems of “recourse” and “justice” consistently fail them, must be immense. Current statistics on the subject would show this supposition to be true.

Sir, our Service members deserve better than this. Period.

For this reason, I and my Walk the Talk Foundation have launched two petition drives in the last year. The first, [calling for substantive reform of our DoD’s failed Inspector General system](#), has notched over 2,600 signatures and was the focal point of our report on the matter [found here](#). The second petition, calling for similar types of reforms in our EO system, was just launched this last week. I have no doubt it will garner the same level of support.

Today, there is much discussion about the external threats to our nation and our democracy: Russia, China, terrorists, hackers. But the more pressing threat to our national security is here and it is now - it is the unabated and unchecked wronging of our Service members by our own Services. It is the lack of real protections and due processes for those who serve which are [causing the now-irrefutable decline in trust in our military institution](#). And until these internal enemies in the present are confronted, we will be ill-prepared to face future external ones.

Thank you again for your advocacy in this matter.

Sincerely,

Ryan Sweazey, Lt Col, USAF (retired)

22-year military veteran,

U.S. Air Force Academy graduate,

Former fighter pilot, and combat veteran

If you feel that you have been a victim of these types of concerns, feel free to reach out privately at francescagraham@walkthetalkfoundation.org, or share your story in the comments.

PETITIONS:

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1. [SIGN THIS PETITION](#) urging the Supreme Court of the United States to hear the case of Staff Sergeant Ryan Carter who was paralyzed from the chest down following a routine surgery at Walter Reed.
2. [SIGN THIS PETITION](#) demanding that our leaders in Congress change the DoD's unjust administrative investigatory system.
3. [SIGN THIS PETITION](#) demanding real anti-harassment reform in the Military and Coast Guard now.

If you would like to help us fight these issues, please consider donating to the [Walk the Talk Foundation](#) via either [Venmo](#) or [PayPal](#). We greatly appreciate your support.

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