

The DoD Times (Redacted)



Episode Three: Despicable Decisions in Coast Guard Sector Los Angeles-Long Beach

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Did You Know: The leadership at Coast Guard Sector Los Angeles-Long Beach has been known to find sailors guilty of violating federal law, specifically the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), through administrative processes that deny the sailors' due process. These denials include preventing the accused from reviewing the evidence presented against them and from challenging the findings or providing a rebuttal.

Here are some potential implications of these facts:

1. **Violation of Legal and Constitutional Rights:** The right to due process is a cornerstone of both the U.S. Constitution and military justice. Denying sailors the opportunity to review evidence or rebut charges undermines their legal protections, which could expose the Coast Guard to legal challenges and accusations of constitutional violations.
2. **Erosion of Trust in the Command Structure:** Sailors may lose confidence in leadership if they believe the system is unfair or biased. This could result in a breakdown of trust, diminished morale, and reluctance to engage with the chain of command, ultimately impacting unit cohesion and mission effectiveness.
3. **Increased Risk of Wrongful Convictions:** Without proper access to evidence or the ability to defend themselves, sailors may be wrongfully found guilty of UCMJ violations. This can lead to unjust punishments, damaging careers, reputations, and future opportunities for those affected.
4. **Potential for Abuse of Power:** A lack of transparency and accountability in the disciplinary process creates an environment where leadership can misuse their authority. Such practices could be exploited to target or silence individuals, leading to a culture of fear and retaliation within the command.

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5. **Undermining of Military Discipline and Justice:** The military justice system relies on principles of fairness and accountability to maintain discipline and order. Violating due process compromises the integrity of this system, weakening its legitimacy and effectiveness as a tool for maintaining discipline within the ranks.
6. **Reputational Harm to the Coast Guard:** If these practices come to light, it could damage the Coast Guard's public image and diminish the trust of the American people in the institution's commitment to upholding justice and fairness.
7. **Long-term Impact on Retention and Recruitment:** Sailors subjected to unfair disciplinary processes may leave the service early, and potential recruits may be deterred from joining an organization perceived as unjust. This could have long-term consequences for talent retention and recruitment within the Coast Guard.

The denial of due process in administrative proceedings at Coast Guard Sector Los Angeles-Long Beach presents a serious threat to the principles of fairness and justice that are foundational to the U.S. military and our nation. When sailors are found guilty of Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) violations without the opportunity to review evidence or challenge the findings, their legal and constitutional rights are undermined, trust in leadership is eroded, and the integrity of military justice is compromised.

We call on **Coast Guard leadership** to take immediate and decisive steps to restore fairness in the disciplinary process. This includes ensuring that all sailors are granted full access to the evidence used against them, the opportunity to provide a rebuttal, and a transparent review of their cases. Commanders must uphold the principles of justice and prevent any misuse of authority that may lead to wrongful convictions or abuse of power.

We urge **Congress** to conduct oversight of Coast Guard disciplinary processes, ensuring that they adhere to the constitutional protections guaranteed to all service members. Legislative action may be necessary to close any gaps that allow for the violation of due process and to hold accountable those responsible for unjust administrative actions.

We ask the **American people** to stand in support of the men and women of the Coast Guard by demanding transparency and accountability in the military justice system. Our service members, who dedicate themselves to the defense of the nation, deserve a system that operates with integrity and fairness, protecting their rights as they protect ours.

Together, we must act to ensure that justice prevails within the Coast Guard, preserving the values that define our military and our democracy.

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Feel free to reach out privately at francescagraham@walkthetalkfoundation.org or in the comments.

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