

APRIL 22, 2015

Subj: WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MATTHEW SOULIER, MD FOR THE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS PANEL

Members of the Judicial Proceedings Panel, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to present comments about my observations regarding retaliation during military judicial proceedings. During testimony to the Panel on April 10, 2015, I observed that it did not appear that victims had uniformed service people who supported her during the trial. I mentioned a victim liaison, but I neglected to mention the presence of a uniformed Special Victims Counsel (SVC), which has been a newer addition to support the rights of victims during the adjudicative process. I failed to mention the SVC, not because I do not consider them to be an important part of protecting the rights of victims, but because I have not observed them to play a role in deterring unit retaliation in the courtroom. Frankly, I do not know if SVC's consider part of their mission to monitor, report, and defend against retaliation towards the victim. However, I have not experienced SVC's to have a strong emotional connection to the victims. They have appeared to have a more "client-like" relationship, which seems appropriate given their mission. I have not observed an emotional or social connection to their clients that would be critical to support the negative effects of retaliation.

More importantly, as it relates to my testimony, SVC's do not affect the unit dynamics that I have observed repeatedly ostracize and isolate the victim. SVC's do not alter my described experience in the courtroom in which the accused usually has explicit and visible support from his unit, whereas the victim lacks social and emotional support for her unit. Further, I am yet to witness any hint of unit validation of the victim experience, at least during or immediately following judicial proceedings of sexual assault. Again, I am not faulting unit support for the accused, but I am simply observing as an outsider that the judicial proceedings seem to represent the apex of prior months of rejection, isolation, and blaming of the victim. I have consulted to both the defense and government, but the typical transparent disgust for the victim from the unit dynamics, despite whatever support she receives from lawyers, is in stark contrast to the explicit unit support for the accused during these judicial proceedings.

Thank you for the time and opportunity to communicate with the panel.

Very Respectfully,

Matthew Soulier, MD