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United States Senate

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March 20, 2018

The Honorable James Mattis
Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Mattis,

I write today to express my concern about the safety and well-being of children attending schools operated by Department of Defense Education Activity. It was recently reported that there have been several hundred instances of juvenile sexual assault involving students at Department of Defense schools since 2007. Moreover, it has been alleged the Department of Defense has failed to accurately record and track these incidents, or take appropriate action to ensure offenders are held accountable and victims receive a proper level of support.

I am troubled by these reports, not only because they involve claims of sexual assault involving juveniles, but also because they undermine the special trust placed in Department-operated schools by the military families who rely on these schools to provide a safe educational environment for their children.

While I recognize the decision about whether to prosecute a case involving civilians ultimately rests with local authorities or federal prosecutors based upon the facts and circumstances of the situation, I am concerned with the apparent lack of Departmental oversight in this area. As such, I seek information concerning the following:

1. Since 2007, how many allegations of sexual assault have been reported by students at Department-operated schools?
2. How many of these allegations were made against fellow students?
3. How many of these allegations were made against civilian adults not subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice?
4. How many of these allegations were referred to military authorities for investigation or action?
5. How many of these allegations were referred to civilian authorities for investigation or action?
6. When a student reports an incident of sexual assault, what support services are made available to that individual?
7. What administrative steps are taken by the school when a student is suspected of sexual assault?
8. Does the Department have a formal structure in place to report and respond to incidents of sexual assault involving students at its schools? If so, how are those cases handled?

I look forward to your prompt response in this matter.

Sincerely,



Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator

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