

U.S. FORUM CONNECTION #113, MAY 2013

This publication is intended for your information about issues important to education, women and children. How you choose to use the information included here is up to you.

This free newsletter is sponsored by the United States Forum of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International. The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International is an organization of leading women educators with over 90,000 members. Delta Kappa Gamma members wishing to subscribe to this FREE newsletter should send a request to Bedenbaugh.Angela@gmail.com. We urge you to share this newsletter with other interested individuals who are not members of Delta Kappa Gamma or members who do not subscribe to this publication.

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RAPE IN THE MILITARY

The sexual assault of men and women in the military has been brought to public attention off and on since 1991 when the Tailhook scandal took place and has been a continuing problem which again received a good deal of publicity within the last five years in a report by Cokie and Steven Roberts. It has gotten more attention recently following the filing of sexual assault charges against two men who were designated military watch dogs to protect soldiers against rape. A recently aired NBC News report states “The Pentagon released startling new statistics showing that sexual assaults in the military rose by 35 percent since 2010. The troubling report was compounded by news that an Air Force officer in charge of the branch’s sexual assault prevention program was recently arrested and charged with sexual assault.”

Trina McDonald, a naval veteran and herself a rape victim, has recently presented the U.S. Senate with a petition containing 113,000 signatures which asks for changes in the Uniform Code of Military Justice that would remove the decision to prosecute sexual charges from the chain of command. It is estimated that over 26,000 sexual assaults annually most of which are not reported. The web site mydutytospeak.com has been established to allow victims to share their stories.

On May 23, 2013, Senators Claire McCaskill (D-Missouri), and Susan Collins, (R-Maine), and Representatives. Nikki Tsongas (D-Massachusetts) and Michael Turner (R-Ohio), introduced bills in the Senate and House, respectively, they believe will help empower victims of sexual assault while making it tougher for perpetrators to get away with their actions. The bills would prohibit commanding officers from overturning or dismissing court-marshaled convictions on sexual assault., It would 1) mandate input from the victim; 2) mandate dishonorable discharge or worse for anyone convicted of rape, sexual assault, forcible sodomy, or an attempt at any of those offenses; and 3) it would eliminate the five-year statute of limitations in pressing charges for sexual offenses. Removing the five year limitation for prosecution of sexual offences should enable victims who were punished for being assaulted to finally get justice. This bipartisan support should give the bill a good chance at being passed.

IMMIGRATION REFORM AND EDUCATION

The Comprehensive Immigration Reform (CIR) bill (S.744, H.R.490) is currently being marked up in the Senate which means that it will probably be out of committee and on the floor of the Senate for action before long. What this can mean for teachers and education was apparent when an immigration sweep resulted in over 500 illegal aliens being deported. Although the parents were deported, most of their children were born in this country and were, therefore, U.S. citizens who could not be deported. What happens to those children and the schools they attend? The parents may elect to take the children out of the country with them or they may arrange to leave the children in the care of a local person. In any case this is an emotional stress on the children and by extension on the teachers and students in the school. When such a large number of adults are deported at

least some will take their children with them and classes in local schools are decimated. In the case mentioned above it was estimated that about 25% of the children in a small local school were affected.

TITLE IX LEGAL ACTION

The National Women’s Law Center (NWLC) has filed an amicus brief with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit supporting the district court’s recent ruling that Castle Park High School in Chula Vista, California violated Title IX of the federal law prohibiting sexual discrimination in education. The district court held that the school 1) systematically failed to provide equal participation opportunities for girls and equal treatment of girls’ teams, 2) retaliated against the female athletes whose parents and coach complained by firing the coach. The Center’s brief supports the district court’s finding that the school failed to satisfy any prong of Title IX’s three-part participation test. The school 1) had a 6.7% percentage point disparity between female enrollment and sports participation, 2) failed to expand opportunities for girls, and 3) recently eliminated a girls’ team. Additionally the school provided girls’ teams with inferior scheduling, equipment, coaching, and practice and competitive facilities. For example, the girls’ softball field was full of divots, grooves and uneven dirt while the boys’ baseball field was well maintained and included state-of-the-art dugouts. Following complaints by a parent and the softball coach about the girls’ inferior treatment, Castle Park High School again violated Title IX by firing the softball coach and replaced him with a less experienced person.

The lesson from this experience is that in order to achieve equal treatment for female students, individuals and groups are going to have to complain and often take will have to take legal action. Locally a filing with EEOC resulted in the construction of a university girls’ softball field after 2-3 years of concentrated action by supporters of the women’s softball program at the university. Those wanting to effect change should be prepared to spend time and money to get the necessary change. Any legal action, whether through the courts or the legislative process, is lengthy a fact which should be taken into account in getting the desired result.

BULLYING

If you were unable to access the special message on bullying, use either Google or Bing and type in “Jonathan and Charlotte audition” to see the audition. Then type in “Jonathan and Charlotte final” to see them three to four weeks later. Note the change in Jonathan’s behavior.

FORUM FACEBOOK PAGE LINK

For those of you desiring discussion of legislative topics there is a U. S. Forum Facebook page. It is online at <http://www.facebook.com/DKG.US.Forum>

CONTACT ADDRESSES FOR GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

U.S. GOVERNMENT CONTACT INFORMATION can be obtained through Congressional Switchboard [1-866-327-8670](tel:1-866-327-8670) [this is a toll free number]. You can contact your Congressman and Senator through this number without paying long distance charges. <http://www.house.gov/> for members of the House of Representatives <http://www.senate.gov/> for members of the U.S. Senate
White House [1-202-456-1111](tel:1-202-456-1111)

STATE GOVERNMENT CONTACT INFORMATION can be obtained through <http://www.emailyourgovernor.com/> Information available at this site allows contact with governors, members of the state legislature, state supreme court, congressional delegation and state agencies such as

the Education Department, Attorney General, Motor Vehicles Department and Voter Registration. PLEASE NOTE THAT SOME OF THIS INFORMATION MAY BE OUT OF DATE

FIVE CONSTITUENT CONTACTS WILL CAUSE A LEGISLATOR TO PAY SERIOUS ATTENTION TO A GIVEN ISSUE.