

## **S.871, the Combating Military Sexual Assault Act of 2013**

*Senator Patty Murray and Senator Kelly Ayotte's bill would expand and improve the Military Sexual Assault (MSA) prevention and response resources available to victims of these crimes.*

### **The Problem:**

Sexual assault within the military continues to occur at alarming levels – 26,000 in 2012 alone, [according to Department of Defense \(DoD\) estimates](#). During this same period, fewer than 3,000 servicemembers reported being sexually assaulted. This means thousands of MSA victims are left to face the aftermath of their assault alone, while their attackers may never face justice. We must work to increase the confidence of sexual assault victims in the military that they will receive the support and justice they deserve.

### **The Solution:**

#### *S.871, the Combating Military Sexual Assault Act of 2013*

Senator Murray and Senator Ayotte's legislation is a substantial response to the serious problem of sexual assault in the armed forces. The Combating MSA Act would address a number of gaps within current law and policy, and would build upon the positive steps that DoD and the individual services have taken in recent years. The Combating MSA Act would:

- Provide victims of sexual assault with Special Victims' Counsel – a military lawyer who will assist sexual assault victims throughout the process
- Enhance the responsibilities and authority of DoD's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office so that it can better oversee efforts to combat MSA across the armed forces and regularly track and report on a range of MSA statistics, including assault rate, number of cases brought to trial, and compliance with appropriate laws and regulations within each of the individual services.
- Refer sexual assault cases to the general court-martial level when sexual assault charges are filed or to the next superior competent authority when there is a conflict of interest in the immediate chain of command.
- Prohibit sexual contact between instructors and trainees during and within 30 days of completion of basic training or its equivalent.
- Ensure that Sexual Assault Response Coordinators are available to members of the National Guard and Reserve at all times and regardless of whether they are operating under Title 10 or Title 32 authority.