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Statement of Gloria Allred

Today we are here on International Women's Day to speak out about the victimization and denigration of many female U.S. Marines and to discuss what steps are being taken and should be taken to promote respect for women who are proud U.S. Marines.

The issue arose because a private Facebook page entitled "Marines United" posted many photos of female U.S. Marines. In some photos, the women were fully clothed or partially clothed. In other cases, the women were naked. These photos appear to have been posted without the knowledge and consent of the women whose photos were posted.

As a result of the posting, many men who were either current or former U.S. Marines posted comments on that page that were obscene. Some posters suggested sexually assaulting women Marines or rape or that women did not belong in the U.S. Marine Corps. One comment was that "women Marines are not real Marines" and another comment suggested that they should be killed by "friendly fire".

Ultimately, many of these photos and others of women in all branches of the Armed Services were posted on a shared drive where anyone could view them and which disclosed the name and rank of the women in uniform and where they were stationed and how they could be contacted. This information which women had not authorized led to the denigration and victimization of women who serve our country; and resulted in their being targeted and contacted by strangers with predatory intentions and actions.

Much of what occurred is a violation of the U.S. Code of Military Justice which states:



Viewing, Visual Recording, or Broadcasting.— Any person subject to this chapter who, without legal justification or lawful authorization—

(1) knowingly and wrongfully views the private area of another person, without that other person's consent and under circumstances in which that other person has a reasonable expectation of privacy;

(2) knowingly photographs, videotapes, films, or records by any means the private area of another person, without that other person's consent and under circumstances in which that other person has a reasonable expectation of privacy; or

(3) knowingly broadcasts or distributes any such recording that the person knew or reasonably should have known was made under the circumstances proscribed in paragraphs (1) and (2);

is guilty of an offense under this section and shall be punished as a court-martial may direct.

The NCIS is now investigating this chain of events.

Yesterday the U.S. Marine Commandant, Robert Neller, released an extremely important video in which he stated "When I hear allegations of Marine denigration by fellow Marines, I don't think such behavior is that of true warriors or fighters." He then urged victims to report their abuse and instructed his officers and all Marines to support the victims.

We are encouraged by and appreciate General Neller's firm response and today I have sent him a letter asking him to meet in person with us, and other victims of misconduct who have suffered as a result of the posting of the unauthorized and unconsented to photos and the disparaging and sexist comments by fellow Marines and former Marines involved in the comments to the photos.

We believe that the Marine Corps would benefit if their leader, General Neller would meet in person with the victims and with me. We would like to discuss with him our suggestions for promoting more respect for women who are U.S. Marines. We would also like to discuss with him our suggestions for encouraging reports by victims, and how to assure that victims' reports will be investigated in a timely manner.

Many victims are afraid to report and we want to encourage them to file their complaints. We would also like to discuss with Marine Commandant Neller our suggestions for assuring appropriate disciplinary consequences for those who have been found to have violated the Uniform Rules of Military Justice.

We understand the problem and we would like to be part of a constructive solution. Women who are U.S. Marines have earned and deserve our respect and trust. We look forward to General Neller's response.

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