

[IAVA Statement on Failure of Military Justice Improvement Act Vote](#)

New York (June 16, 2015) – Today the Military Justice Improvement Act (MJIA) did not receive enough votes in the U.S. Senate to be included in a package of amendments to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY2016. This is the second time in as many years the bill failed to receive enough support to move forward in the Senate.

The critical legislation introduced by Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) is designed to address the systemic fear that survivors of military sexual assault have in deciding whether to report the crimes committed against them. The estimated number of unwanted sexual contacts reported by service members has remained the same since 2010: an average of 52 new cases every day.

“We are frustrated and disappointed by today’s vote,” said IAVA CEO and Founder Paul Rieckhoff. “This amendment should have been a clear case of bipartisan action at work. The Defense Department’s own statistics show that three out of four survivors of sexual assault lack confidence in military justice to even report crimes committed against them. We applaud Senator Gillibrand for re-introducing this amendment and look toward Congress to take substantial, effective action to protect our military members against sexual assault.”

Despite incremental reforms passed in the last two National Defense Authorization Acts, the latest Pentagon survey found that 62 percent of women who reported being sexually assaulted experienced retaliation, unchanged since 2012. The MJIA would establish a more impartial and balanced military justice system by placing decisions of whether to move cases involving serious crimes into the hands of experienced military prosecutors.