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Service Women's Action Network

September 12, 2011



Dear Veterans, Service Members and Allies,

We are writing to report big news! After a year of litigating, legislating, advocating, and all-around rabble-rousing, SWAN's efforts to bring justice and equality to an unfair VA benefits system is finally getting national attention.



Today, [The New York Times](#) featured SWAN's work in an editorial that was read nationwide. This editorial culminates a year of our work on Capitol Hill and with VA to get policymakers to recognize that

VA regulations discriminate against veterans who file benefits claims based on military rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment.

In fact, SWAN's lawsuit with the ACLU against VA and DOD last fall has revealed startling numbers: While 53% of combat-related PTSD claims are awarded by the Veterans Benefits Administration, **only 32% of Military Sexual Trauma-related PTSD claims are awarded.** This 21% differential is more evidence of the horrifying injustices faced by survivors of military sexual violence.

SWAN now needs your direct participation to achieve victory for veterans. To help make sure we can keep breaking ground in equality and justice for America's veterans, [click here to donate now](#).

We also need you to contact the people who can make this change happen. We encourage you to use our ready-made forms so that policymakers can act quickly. We need you to [click on this link to RAISE YOUR VOICE and email, snail mail and call the key officials who can change this unfair policy now](#).

Let's keep the pressure on to make sure VA does the right thing. SWAN has helped introduce [key legislation](#) to repair the VA's broken policy on Military Sexual Trauma claims. While SWAN continues its work to increase justice and protection for our troops in uniform, let's make sure our veterans who have already been impacted by these awful crimes get the benefits they deserve.

In service,

### The New York Times

Read The New York Times editorial on sexual violence in the military featuring SWAN's work [here](#).

### FOIA Litigation

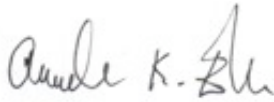
Read about SWAN's Freedom of Information Act litigation against Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs [here](#).

### H.R. 930

Read the full text of H.R. 930, Representative Chellie Pingree's (D-ME) bill to improve the evaluation process for the disability claims of service members with PTSD related to Military Sexual Trauma [here](#).

### S. 1391

Read the full text of S. 1391, Senator John Tester's (D-MT) Senate companion bill to H.R. 930 [here](#).



Anu Bhagwati  
Executive Director, Service Women's Action Network

## Donate Now

### Defend Equality: A Campaign to End Gender Discrimination and Sexual Violence in the Military

"Defend Equality" and help SWAN end gender discrimination and sexual violence in the military! A generous donor has offered to match your gifts dollar for dollar up to \$25,000, thereby doubling your donation and doubling its impact on the work we do! [Donate now](#) to double your gift and help us reach our goal!



**Service Women's Action Network**  
serving military women

**Defend Equality**  
By **Rovika Rajkishun**

*A Campaign to End Gender Discrimination And Sexual Violence In The Military*

\$4,780 raised of \$25,000 goal

**INDIEGOGO**

## About Us

SWAN is a human rights organization founded and led by women veterans. SWAN's vision is to transform military culture by securing equal opportunity and the freedom to serve in uniform without threat of harassment, discrimination, intimidation or assault. SWAN also seeks to reform veterans' services on a national scale to guarantee equal access to quality health care, benefits and resources for women veterans and their families. You can find the Service Women's Action Network on our [homepage](#), on [Twitter](#) or on [Facebook](#).

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