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February 25, 2010

Gail H. McGinn
Deputy Under Secretary
of Defense for Plans
U.S. Department of Defense
1400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Ms. McGinn:

During the hearing entitled, "Sexual Assault in the Military Part IV: Are We Making Progress?," held before the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, the Subcommittee requested your response to the following question for the record:

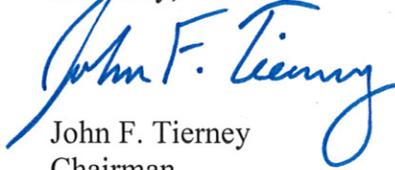
At our hearing entitled "Sexual Assault in the Military Part III: Context and Causes" (July 25, 2009), we heard testimony from Mr. Helen Benedict about the connection between the ban on women in ground combat and sexual assault. Specifically, she testified that the ban sends the signal from the top that women are second class soldiers. This inferiority perpetuates an antagonistic view of women that helps create a culture that is conducive to sexual assault. She recommended that the Department of Defense end the combat ban for women.

Attached is Ms. Benedict's testimony for your reference. You will find the specific mentions of the combat ban on pages four and nine.

What is your response to Ms. Benedict's suggestion that the combat ban contributes to a culture that is conducive to sexual assault? In light of this, do you believe the combat ban should be reexamined?

Please provide your response to this question by March 26, 2010. The Subcommittee appreciates your willingness to respond to this additional question. Please contact Talia Dubovi or Andy Wright at (202) 225-2548 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



John F. Tierney
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Security
and Foreign Affairs

Enclosure

cc: Jeff Flake
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Security
and Foreign Affairs