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House of Representatives

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Opening Statement of Chairman Carolyn B. Maloney Subcommittee on National Security Hearing on “JROTC: Protecting Cadets from Sexual Abuse and Instructor Misconduct” November 16, 2022

Thank you, Chairman Lynch, for holding today’s critically important hearing, and for your many years of leadership advocating for the health and safety of everyone who bravely and proudly wears our nation’s uniform.

The Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps program, or JROTC, provides high school students with an important opportunity to strengthen their leadership and interpersonal skills, improve their physical fitness, and pursue their education—all while immersing themselves in military culture.

Every year, thousands of young cadets graduate from JROTC. Many of them go on to pursue a career of military service. This program is crucial for the future of our military, so I was deeply disturbed by the report in the New York Times this summer, finding that dozens of JROTC instructors have sexually assaulted, abused, and harassed their students. That is why Chairman Lynch and I wrote to the Department of Defense and the military services in August seeking information about how the military services conduct oversight of their JROTC programs, and what changes are needed to protect cadets from predatory instructors.

What we have learned from the Department is alarming. The New York Times identified 33 JROTC instructors who have been accused of sexually assaulting students in the last five years. But our investigation shows that the problem is even worse than that—we found that the Defense Department has received at least 60 allegations of sexual abuse, harassment, or other misconduct about JROTC instructors in the past five years—58 of which were substantiated following a law enforcement or school investigation.

The Department also told us that the military services do not always conduct annual, in-person evaluations of their JROTC programs. While the Army conducts so-called “assist visits” on a yearly basis for individual programs in need of “additional attention,” it otherwise only inspects one-third of its units each year. Meanwhile, the Air Force completes in-person assessments once every three years, while the Navy and the Marine Corps perform such examinations every other year.

I want to be clear: the vast majority of JROTC instructors are decent and trustworthy members or former members of our armed services, and they continue to serve our country honorably by teaching and mentoring our nation’s next generation of leaders. But [our investigation](#) has exposed that a lack of Pentagon oversight appears to be enabling the predatory behavior of some JROTC instructors. Any allegation of sexual assault, abuse, or harassment in this program is one too many—and needs to be addressed.

I hope that today’s hearing will illuminate some of the lapses that have contributed to the scourge of sexual abuse and harassment committed by JROTC instructors, and I am confident that the Oversight Committee—led by this Subcommittee—will continue to work on a bipartisan basis to ensure the safety and well-being of our nation’s JROTC cadets.

I thank the Chairman again for holding this hearing. I yield back the balance of my time.

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