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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

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December 19, 2023

The Honorable Admiral Linda Fagan
Commandant
U.S. Coast Guard
2703 Martin Luther King Junior Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20593

Dear Admiral Fagan,

On September 12, 2023, the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (“PSI” or the “Subcommittee”) sent you a letter as part of an inquiry into the mishandling of sexual assault and sexual harassment cases at the United States Coast Guard Academy (the “Academy”), as well as the United States Coast Guard’s (the “Coast Guard”) failure to reveal Operation Fouled Anchor, and its associated report, to Congress and the public.¹ In the three months since the Subcommittee’s initial letter was sent, the Coast Guard has failed to provide critical records responsive to our request.

Since launching its inquiry, PSI has received outreach from numerous survivors who have recounted their harrowing experiences of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and retaliation at the Academy and in the Coast Guard. On December 12, 2023, the Subcommittee heard from four of these individuals, who testified that the failures of Coast Guard and Academy leadership amplified the trauma of these events, in some cases leading to mental health struggles, suicide attempts, tarnished or lost relationships, or the decision to leave the Academy.² It is clear from this testimony, and the Subcommittee’s inquiry to date, that the Coast Guard’s culture of cover-up has allowed sexual assault and sexual harassment to persist for decades, both at the Academy and in the Coast Guard. It is equally apparent that accountability and systematic change at both the Coast Guard and the Academy are necessary to address past failures and to ensure that future cadets are protected. Full compliance with the Subcommittee’s inquiry is a necessary component of these actions.

You have expressed a commitment to investigate reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment, hold perpetrators accountable, support victims, and be fully transparent with Congress and the American people.³ It is imperative that you live up to that commitment and

¹ Letter from Chair Richard Blumenthal and Ranking Member Ron Johnson, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, to Admiral Linda Fagan, Commandant of the United States Coast Guard (Sept. 12, 2023).

² Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, *Hearing on Coast Guard Academy Whistleblowers: Stories of Sexual Assault and Harassment*, 117th Cong. (Dec. 12, 2023).

³ Senate Subcommittee on Oceans, Fisheries, Climate Change and Manufacturing, *Hearing on Coast Guard Budget Oversight*, 117th Cong. (Jul. 13, 2023).

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ensure that the Coast Guard provides all requested documents and information to the Subcommittee without further delay. Should the Coast Guard continue to withhold or redact requested records, PSI will have no choice but to utilize other means to ensure compliance with congressional oversight. Please provide all records, without redactions, that are responsive to our requests, including but not limited to unredacted email records related to the decision of whether to disclose Operation Fouled Anchor to Congress and all other items identified in Enclosure A. To ensure that the Subcommittee's inquiry can continue without further delay, all requested information should be produced by no later than January 19, 2024. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
Chair
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations



Ron Johnson
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations