



NMSAO/NMFAO

NATIONAL MILITARY SPOUSE ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION



PO Box 622, Vienna, Virginia 22183

nmsao.org

800.467.7077

February 23, 2019

Dear Second Lady Pence,

The National Military Spouse Advocacy Organization (NMSAO, soon to be National Military Family Advocacy Organization, or NMFAO) aims to educate our nation's governing bodies about domestic abuse in military families, and provide assistance to military spouses and their children who have nowhere else to turn in such circumstances. Because of your dedication to and concern for military families, we are urgently requesting your assistance to shine a light on the pervasive crises that attend military families impacted by domestic abuse, including abandonment, child abuse, neglect and even fraud perpetrated by the military judicial system which fails to support military families in their time of greatest need.

We are presenting this issue to you because our military families have earned the right to protection and support for their service and sacrifice for this country, yet military spouses are routinely faced with the following challenges:

- The Family Advocacy Programs (FAPs) and Inspector General Inquiries are not fully utilized, as military spouses are discouraged from reporting abuse, thereby not receiving fair and equitable justice—and those who utilize the services are often shunned.
 - Most cases of abuse go unreported, as first sergeants and commanders discourage victims from reporting abuse in the military.
 - Abuse victims who find courage to report are often silenced by FAP claims that the abuse “did not meet abuse criteria.”
 - Victims finding the courage and mental capacity necessary to document and report abuse and seek Congressional inquiry/assistance are often told this is a “civil matter” and refused assistance.
 - Federally funded domestic violence crisis hotlines refer military spouses reporting abuse back to the military installation's FAP, leaving them trapped in a morass of unresponsive or apathetic bureaucracies.
- The military system fails to provide military families any rights or advocates in exchange for their countless sacrifices and service; instead, the military's solution is *to encourage the abusive military servicemember to file for divorce to silence the reported abuse of spouses and children!*
 - This collusion further empowers abusive servicemembers, who regularly utilize the local judicial system to retaliate with ‘legal abuse,’ usually in the form of child custody suits.
 - Most abandoned, deserted, and homeless military spouses do not have the time, emotional capacity or finances to pursue justice in local courts for support.
 - The Servicemember's Civil Relief Act (SCRA), designed to protect and serve military families, is exploited by abusive servicemembers to deliberately force their families into homelessness in acts of retaliation and punishment.
 - Military spouses are penalized for pro se representation and for reporting the abuse in civilian courts, where judges have inadequate knowledge of domestic violence, favor

1 of 2

National Military Spouse Advocacy Organization (NMSAO) is a non-profit, 501(C)(3)

As a non-profit advocacy organization, National Military Spouse Advocacy Organization's (NMSAO) mission is to help restore and protect the rights and benefits that are often denied to Military Spouses and their families after abandonment or abuse from a military servicemember.



NMSAO/NMFAO

NATIONAL MILITARY SPOUSE ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION



PO Box 622, Vienna, Virginia 22183

nmsao.org

800.467.7077

- military personnel, and where the spouses cannot bring out-of-state military entities to testify, nor afford expert witnesses.
- After being abandoned, deserted, abused and forced into homelessness, military spouses often suffer the additional indignity of have to file for bankruptcy.
 - Military spouses and children end up with PTSD and other mental health issues after being exposed to the chronic crises attendant with abuse—homelessness, poverty, neglect, etc.
 - Military spouses are denied medical benefits upon divorce, resulting in lack of health coverage and nowhere to turn for their own mental health assistance.
 - Additionally, they must fight systems who stonewall their efforts to obtain military identification cards for their children to obtain medical assistance.

Most military spouses knowingly sacrifice their career for their servicemember spouse in order to serve our nation, but are not aware that such sacrifice will also require them to surrender their rights for justice or protection in the event an abusive military servicemember spouse legally abandons them and leaves them destitute. There are countless compelling stories that need to be brought to light--numerous military families who struggle to survive without any advocate or rights within the military system. There is currently no method or manner to track the number of abuse cases that are reported to FAP, or to understand whether the reported cases were actually investigated, adjudicated or brought to justice.

This is NOT “a civil matter.” This is a military matter that needs immediate justice and provision from the government of the United States, who has directly benefitted from the sacrifices of the women and children abandoned by its military personnel and command.

NMSAO recently requested an investigation and inquiry by Congressional, Senate, Military and Department of Defense representatives into the Family Advocacy Program and Inspector General Offices at Joint Base Andrews, MD, and Hurlburt Field, FL, for failure to take appropriate action after numerous reports of abuse from Walter Reed National Military Medical Clinic (*FAP’s Case #247937*), and Joint Base Andrews’ (*FAP’s Case # 2015-0099, 2015-0063, 2015-0096, and 2015-0064; 2019-0010 and 2019-0011*). We request and invite you to audit this egregious example of how the United States military is ignoring and dishonoring the sacrifices of one military family.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to hearing from you, and hope that we can begin a partnership to resolve these impediments to improving the lives of our sacrificial military spouses and children, and bring justice to those who have served our country “out of uniform.”

Respectfully,

Rohini Hughes

//signed//

Rohini Hughes

Vice-President & Founder

801.390.8859 • rohini.hughes@yahoo.com

Penny Bailey

//signed//

Col. Penny Bailey, U.S. Air Force (Retired)

Military Liaison Board Member

575.791.8391 • penny4al@gmail.com

2 of 2

National Military Spouse Advocacy Organization (NMSAO) is a non-profit, 501(C)(3)

As a non-profit advocacy organization, National Military Spouse Advocacy Organization’s (NMSAO) mission is to help restore and protect the rights and benefits that are often denied to Military Spouses and their families after abandonment or abuse from a military servicemember.