

Hagel Tackles Sexual Immorality in Military

After a report showed that sexual assaults in the military increased by more than one-third since 2010, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel ordered the armed services to take immediate steps to help solve the problem.

“This department may be nearing a stage where the frequency of this crime and the perception that there is tolerance of it could very well undermine our ability to effectively carry out the mission and to recruit and retain the good people we need,” he remarked.

The Pentagon survey revealed that 26,000 people in the armed forces were sexually assaulted last year—a 35 percent jump from the 19,300 service members believed to have been assaulted in 2010.

Morality in Media (MIM) supports Hagel’s efforts, which *USA Today* reports include “holding commanders accountable for creating a climate in which sexual assault is prevented and victims are properly taken care of; reducing the stigma for victims of reporting sexual assault; and enhancing sexual abuse prevention training and education programs for trainers and recruits.”

MIM Executive Director Dawn Hawkins comments, “Research overwhelmingly demonstrates a link between pornography consumption and increased sexual violence and objectification of women. It is no surprise that the Pentagon sees an increase in sexual assaults when it allows the prevalent use of pornography on bases and even allows the sale of pornography in its facilities.

“The next step for Secretary Hagel should be to order the military to stop selling pornography in military exchanges,

which would send a strong message that sexual exploitation is unacceptable," she adds.

The Military Honor and Decency Act prohibits the sale of pornography in military exchange services, commissaries and ships. Despite this federal law, pornography is commonly sold by the military.

"Pornography teaches sexual exploitation," Hawkins explains. "The Pentagon cannot tolerate and sell pornography and then act surprised at sexually exploitive, criminal behavior in the military. Today's porn is violent and misogynistic, and inappropriate for the men and women in uniform who represent the highest and best of American citizenry."

Earlier this year, MIM listed the Department of Defense in its Dirty Dozen List as one of the top facilitators of pornography in America.

"The Pentagon has a serious pornography problem, and it is doing little to combat it. In fact, until Secretary Hagel's most recent actions, the Pentagon seemed to be embracing pornography," notes Hawkins. "Morality In Media receives a steady stream of comments from servicemen and women and their spouses regarding the widespread availability of pornography in the U.S. military."