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MANPOWER AND
RESERVE AFFAIRS

29 August 2022

DACOWITS
4800 Mark Center Drive, Suite 04J25-01
Alexandria, VA 22350

Dear Ms. Shelly O'Neill Stoneman

Thank you for your request for information related to how the Department addresses domestic abuse that involves servicewomen. Specifically, you asked "With some servicewomen now lacking safe and legal access to medical or surgical abortions in restrictive states, are additional processes being put into place to assist pregnant servicewomen who find themselves in a domestic abuse situation?" I am pleased to respond.

The domestic abuse field writ large and Family Advocacy Program (FAP) have long recognized pregnancy as a particular risk factor for escalation of domestic abuse. FAP Domestic Abuse Victim Advocates (DAVAs) will continue to work closely with all victims to offer reporting options, assess and monitor for risk, and develop safety plans. If the report is unrestricted, FAP will collaborate with command, law enforcement, and other components in the Department's Coordinated Community Response to enhance safety and reduce risk.

Victim care and safety is a priority in all situations, to include in instances when safe and legal access to abortions is not readily available. DAVAs link victims of domestic abuse with safe and legal resources, such as medical, housing, and legal representation. Medical will connect eligible victims to covered abortion services. DAVAs inform victims of their options to request a military protective order, no contact order, or civilian protective order. They connect victims to services in the local community when requested and also provide information on the options for expedited transfer for female Service members. When a DAVA is not available or the victim has declined engagement with them, FAP clinical providers will provide the same support.

Thank you for your advocacy on behalf of women in the Armed Forces.

Sincerely,

Joseph D. Ludovici
Principal Director, Office of the Deputy
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military
Community and Family Policy