



## The Senate of Texas

**CÉSAR J. BLANCO**

TEXAS SENATOR  
DISTRICT 29

**PRESS RELEASE**  
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# SENATE COMMITTEE APPROVES LANDMARK MILITARY SEXUAL ASSAULT LEGISLATION BY SENATOR CESAR BLANCO

**Austin, Texas** - Yesterday, the Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs and Border Security approved Senate Bill 623 by Senator Cesar J. Blanco. Senate Bill 623 aims to protect Texas soldiers from military sexual assault and provide avenues of justice and resources for victims.

Victims of military sexual assault often do not report their assaults due to fear of social and professional retaliation, concerns of confidentiality breaches, and a lack of confidence in the military justice system.

Last year, the tragic circumstances surrounding Private First Class Vanessa Guillen's disappearance and untimely death, shed light on how the system fails to protect our heroes. On her own base, a place she should have felt safest, PFC Guillen lived in fear. It was reported that she shared with family and friends that she was assaulted on base, but she was too scared to report it. Vanessa Guillen's story exemplifies the unacceptable pervasiveness of sexual assault in the military. But she isn't alone.

While the Texas Legislature has no jurisdiction over the U.S. military, Texas has the largest state military force in the country with close to 24,000 members in the Texas Military Forces.

### **Senator Blanco issued the following statement:**

"Texas can lead by example in protecting our soldiers from military sexual assaults and ensure our soldiers receive justice, appropriate cares, and resources.

"I thank Chair Campbell and the entire committee for unanimously passing this landmark legislation and standing up for our soldiers and survivors.

"No victim should ever be afraid of reporting their sexual assaults in the military. This bill will help victims come forward by allowing reports and criminal investigations outside the chain of command.

"While no piece of legislation can bring back Private First Class Vanessa Guillen, this Act will protect and help victims receive the justice and care they deserve."

**En Español**

“Texas puede liderar el país con el ejemplo al proteger a nuestras y nuestros soldados de las agresiones sexuales militares y garantizar que nuestras y nuestros soldados reciban justicia, cuidados adecuados y los recursos necesarios.

“Le doy las gracias la Senadora Campbell, y a todo el comité por aprobador unánimemente esta legislación histórica y defender a nuestros soldados y sobrevivientes.

“Ninguna víctima debería de tener miedo de denunciar a sus agresores sexuales en el ejercito. Este proyecto de ley ayudara a las víctimas a recibir justicia al permitir informes e investigaciones criminales fuera de la cadena de mando en las fuerzas armadas.

“Sabemos que ninguna ley va a poder traer de regreso a la soldado de primera clase Vanessa Guillen, pero esta ley protegerá y ayudara a las víctimas de agresiones sexual a recibir la justicia y la atención que merecen.”