



PRESS RELEASE
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House Committee Approves "The Vanessa Guillén Act" by Senator César Blanco

Austin, Texas - Yesterday, the Texas House Committee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs approved Senate Bill 623 by Senator César J. Blanco. Senate Bill 623 aims to protect Texas soldiers from military sexual assault and provide avenues of justice and resources for victims.

Last year, the tragic circumstances surrounding Specialist Vanessa Guillén'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, SPC Guillén 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 Guillén's story exemplifies the unacceptable pervasiveness of sexual assault in the military. But she isn't alone.

Senate Bill 623 now heads to the floor of the Texas House of Representatives for consideration.

Senator Blanco issued the following statement:

"With the approval of the House Committee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs, Senate Bill 623 also known as the Vanessa Guillén Act, is one step closer to becoming law. I appreciate our House sponsor Representative Minjarez and the committee for passing the bill.

"No bill can bring back Vanessa, but we can honor her and all the victims of military sexual assault by preventing future tragedies and providing justice to victims.

"Sexual assault has no place in our society and Texas can lead by example in stomping out sexual assault in our state military by sending the Vanessa Guillén Act to Governor Abbott's desk."

Representative Ina Minjarez issued the following statement:

"Thank you to Chair Raymond, Vice-Chair Buckley, and to the members of the House Committee on Defense & Veteran Affairs for unanimously supporting SB 623.

"This bill protects the brave Texans who serve in our military, and reinforces the sovereignty of the state of Texas and its ability to bring to justice those who commit atrocious acts of violence like sexual assault on her soil.

"During this session, I have thought about Vanessa Guillén daily, and continue to be heartbroken and angry that our system would allow for this to happen to a young, brave and resilient woman serving our country. Now more than ever, she deserves for this state to fight for her."