



RESOLUTE

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

DETERMINED. PERSISTENT. UNSTOPPABLE.

PROTECT OUR DEFENDERS (POD) achieves justice on behalf of military sexual assault survivors by focusing on Advocacy, Policy Reform, Legal Services, Research and Mentoring. With this flexible toolkit, POD's actions are targeted, swift, and effective.



ADVOCACY



POLICY REFORM



LEGAL SERVICES



RESEARCH



MENTORING

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DEAR FRIENDS,

In 2019, **Protect Our Defenders** saw critical achievements from our **relentless, long-term efforts** to ensure all servicemembers have access to a safe, respectful work environment and a fair and impartial system of justice.

We tenaciously and successfully pursued reform, kept the spotlight on justice for survivors and provided critical pro bono legal services to veterans, active duty members, their families and civilians who were sexually assaulted, harassed or faced retaliation after reporting the crime.

We are shaping the national narrative. Led by survivors, we launched a national campaign challenging all presidential candidates to support fundamental reform of the broken military justice system. We continued our successful collaboration with the media to drive stories about the broken system and the unacceptable cost to survivors, their families and our communities.

POD leapt into action when the military's highest court, known for its hostility toward victims, erased 30 years of legal precedent and set convicted rapists free. For the first time ever the reversal of a military rape conviction will be heard by the US Supreme Court, thanks to the bravery of survivor, Harmony Allen and, as she expressed, the "unwavering support of POD."

Despite the gridlock in Washington DC, **we successfully advocated for six significant legal reforms** including expanding the right to a special victims attorney for military families who are victims of domestic violence and creating much needed sentencing guidelines.

We take pride in our amazing team of staff and volunteers who continue to work efficiently and effectively to improve the lives of survivors.

And we are grateful to our donors for their vital, steadfast support.

Nancy, Don & Scott



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nancy Parrish'.

Nancy Parrish
Founder and Chair



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Don Christensen'.

Col Don Christensen
USAF (ret),
President



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott Jensen'.

Col Scott Jensen
USMC (ret),
Vice Chair

SHAPING THE NATIONAL NARRATIVE



BRINGING SURVIVORS' VOICES TO THE 2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

LED BY A COMMUNITY OF COURAGEOUS MILITARY SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVORS, POD launched a national campaign asking every presidential candidate to pledge to reform the military justice system by empowering independent military prosecutors—rather than conflicted and inexperienced commanders—to make prosecutorial decisions for serious crimes such as rape and murder.



Survivors leading the campaign (l to r):

HARMONY ALLEN, USAF VET

TERRI ODOM, US ARMY VET

DARCHELLE MITCHELL, US NAVY VET

PAULA COUGHLIN, US NAVY VET

HEATH PHILLIPS, US NAVY VET

BRIGETTE MCCOY, US ARMY VET

"I am heartened that the vast majority of presidential candidates have signed the pledge. I hope each candidate recognizes the critical role they must play, as Commander-in-Chief in protecting our armed forces"

PAULA COUGHLIN



Democratic candidates back plan to change how military investigates sexual assault allegations

By Catherine Valentine, CNN



Protect Our Defenders

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I was retaliated against for reporting rape. Our next president can change that. Ask Joe Biden to sign our pledge.



PROTECTOURDEFENDERS.CO...
A third of all victims are discharged after reporting

LEARN MORE

.....
44,618 people and counting have asked presidential candidates to sign the pledge.
.....



Pete Buttigieg
@PeteButtigieg

If our service members can summon the courage to put their lives on the line to defend our country, elected officials should have the courage to break from the past to ensure safe and healthy environments for those in uniform.

That's why I took the Protect Our Defenders Pledge.



Elizabeth Warren
@ewarren

I was proud to take the @ProtectRDfnders pledge—and I've proposed a plan to end sexual assault in the military. We owe it to our service members to make real change and reform the military justice system.

Visit protectourdefenders.com/pledge to join the movement.

FIERCE JUSTICE

THE WORK OF THE LAW CENTER



2019 LEGAL SERVICES

219 CASES SUBMITTED AND REVIEWED

16
LEGAL CASES

TAKEN IN HOUSE

39
LEGAL CASES

REFERRED TO OUR PRO BONO ATTORNEY NETWORK OR PARTNERS WHO COLLECTIVELY PUT IN:

2,094

HOURS OF SERVICES

53
INDIVIDUALS

VALUED AT

\$1,248,627

RECEIVED ASSISTANCE OTHER THAN DIRECT LEGAL SUPPORT; SUCH AS HELP WITH ACCESSING HEALTHCARE FOR MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA AND FILING FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUESTS TO ACCESS THEIR MILITARY RECORDS

She recorded her rapist's confession. Now, the Supreme Court could hear it.

By Catherine Valentine, CNN
Updated 5:13 PM ET, Mon August 12, 2019



We eagerly await the court's ruling and will continue our fight for victims' rights.

BRINGING VICTIM'S RIGHTS TO THE U.S. SUPREME COURT

IN 2018, THE HIGHEST MILITARY COURT ISSUED A RULING THAT SET CONVICTED RAPISTS FREE. THROUGHOUT 2019, POD WORKED BEHIND THE SCENES WITH SURVIVOR HARMONY ALLEN AND CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERS TO ENSURE THAT THE RULING WOULD BE CHALLENGED AT THE SUPREME COURT.

Against tremendous odds, the case is scheduled to be heard in 2020 and we expect a ruling in the fall. This is the first time that the reversal of a military rape conviction will appear before the Supreme Court. Protect Our Defenders is honored to have filed an amicus brief with survivor Harmony Allen. We believe Harmony is the first survivor ever to file an amicus brief before the Supreme Court arguing to hold her rapist accountable.

HARMONY'S STORY

"I was 19 years old—and only three months into my military career —when I was raped by an instructor at Sheppard Air Force Base. It was so violent that I had to be rushed to the emergency room immediately after completing my rape kit.

Instead of helping me, my commander made my life hell...After nearly two decades, and years of retaliation, my rapist was convicted—only to be set free by a legal loophole.

Never in my wildest imagination would I have thought I had the strength to go public, but I was at a crossroads. With unwavering support from Protect our Defenders, I went to Congressional leaders and to the public.

Finally, we were able to get my case to the Supreme Court! Having my case heard in our nation's highest court has given me a sense of self worth that was stolen when I was 19 years old. And the power to know that one person truly can make change by not giving up even in the darkest situations."

Pictured (top to bottom): Harmony with Rep. Brian Mast, Harmony on CBS, Harmony with Rep. Jackie Speier



THE POWER OF PERSISTENCE

POLICY REFORM



CREATING RACIAL EQUITY IN MILITARY JUSTICE: POD'S RACIAL DISPARITY REPORT LEADS TO LEGISLATIVE REFORMS

JUNE 2017 POD Releases Racial Disparities in Military Justice Report finding that black service members are 50% more likely to be court-martialed and 100% more likely to receive disciplinary action than white service members.

The report receives significant media coverage including a front page story in USA Today.

AUGUST 2018 Congress mandates Government Accountability Office investigation into the report's findings.



JUNE 2019 Government Investigation confirms report's findings and supports POD's recommended reforms. The Pentagon must now track and report race, ethnicity and gender of service members facing the military justice system and the Secretary of Defense must "take steps to address causes" of racial disparities.

POD will keep up the pressure on the military to ensure that they provide the required transparency and take meaningful steps to address causes of racial disparities.

2019 POLICY REFORMS

YEARS OF HARD WORK HAVE COME TO FRUITION AS PROTECT OUR DEFENDERS SAW SIX MAJOR LEGAL REFORMS SIGNED INTO LAW BY CONGRESS. These reforms:

- + Give military families who are victims of domestic violence and child abuse the right to an attorney.
- + Establish sentencing guidelines to reform the archaic process that fails to appropriately punish sex offenders
- + Mandate Secretary of Defense to study an alternative military justice system, which would empower trained prosecutors to handle sexual assault cases and consider the feasibility of a pilot program.
- + Enable military members to seek damages for military medical malpractice for the first time. We believe this first significant crack in the 1950 Feres doctrine will ultimately lead to the same rights for survivors of military sexual assault.
- + Prohibit military appellate courts from overturning rape and sexual assault convictions for “unlawful command influence” unless the accused’s case was materially harmed by a commander’s conduct.
- + Hold the military accountable to victims’ rights law: *Giving survivors a voice on who will prosecute their assailant.*

In 2015, victims gained the right to request their case be handled by civilian authorities rather than the conflicted military chain of command.

Through our client interaction, we found this right was being ignored by the military. POD convinced Congress to order the USDOD Inspector General (IG) to review the military’s compliance with the law.

The IG found that 80% of the time the military either failed to inform victims of their right or failed to properly document the victim’s preference.

The military is now required to document its compliance with the law and to properly inform victims of their rights.



MEDIA: UNRELENTING COVERAGE



MEDIA COVERAGE PLAYS A PIVOTAL ROLE IN RAISING AWARENESS AND PUSHING TOWARD LEGISLATIVE REFORM. POD'S collaborations with media outlets amplifies the voices of survivors and helps hold the military accountable.

IN 2019, POD COLLABORATED WITH NATIONAL, REGIONAL, LOCAL AND TRADE OUTLETS FOR:

10,067

NEWS STORIES*

5,559

PUBLICATION FEATURES**

POD WAS FEATURED ON THE FRONT PAGE OF :

The New York Times

USA TODAY

STARS AND STRIPES.

POD WAS FEATURED IN:

The Washington Post

Newsweek

abc NEWS

CNN

HUFFPOST

REUTERS

* total number of individual stories published and their syndication

** total number of publications featuring the stories, including syndicates

HONORING OUR MOST TENACIOUS ALLIES:

Annual Justice Award given to leading attorney in POD's pro-bono network.

POD proudly presented the 2019 Justice Award to Mary Rose Hughes, Partner at Perkins Coie.



Since attending a 2016 meeting about POD's Pro Bono Attorney Network, Mary Rose has become a fierce advocate, representing survivors of military sexual assault all over the country and encouraging other civilian attorneys to do the same.

Mary Rose has confronted some of the most difficult challenges imposed by the Department of Defense. She has gone above and beyond to overcome them.

Today, Mary Rose partners with POD to train civilian attorneys. In 2019, she helped create POD's Legal Training Manual to better assist other civilian attorneys who are interested in helping survivors but are daunted by the military justice system.

2019 COMMUNITY STATISTICS

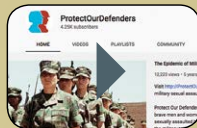
3,495 SURVIVOR NETWORK

2019 PEOPLE REACHED ON



702,425

2019 ONLINE VIDEO VIEWS



158,961

2019 WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS



111,863

ALL TIME VIEWS

1,262,926

A MOTHER'S ENDURING LOVE

DANIEL'S COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT



FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF US NAVY HM2 DANIEL BUCK DONATE TO PROTECT OUR DEFENDERS IN HIS HONOR.

IN EARLY DECEMBER, POD BEGAN RECEIVING DONATIONS IN HONOR OF HM2 DANIEL BUCK. Our staff did not know Daniel or his story. Then we received a letter from his mother.

LETTER FROM BETTY BUCK, DANIEL'S MOTHER

"You may have noticed people are sending donations in my son's name HM2 Daniel Buck. He took his life on April 29th, 2019 after being transferred back to Camp Pendleton from Tokyo.

He was sexually abused on a boat. What those three men did cost my son his life. The Navy failed him and nothing will ever come of it because Danny is now gone and he was THE evidence.

It was not the first time these men did it and it won't be the last but they are still serving in the Navy and since they weren't convicted, no one knows. Somehow this has to stop or there will be more fathers, mothers, siblings and children like my granddaughter without a parent."

—Betty Buck



.....
"...We must speak up and say ENOUGH. Whatever I can do, all you have to do is ask."
.....

FROM DANNY'S OBITUARY:

Danny enlisted in the US Navy as a Corpsman in 2009. He rose to the rank of HM2, earning his surface war insignia while proudly serving our country in Afghanistan, Iraq, throughout Asia and Europe. He was stationed around the world including the US Naval Hospital in Catania, Italy where he continued his philanthropic ways organizing the annual Relay for Life event. Danny was 39 and is survived by his wife, Sarah and daughter Katherine whom he regularly referred to as his "girls". He was a loving husband and a proud father. Danny is also survived by his mother, Betty, sisters Kelly and Erin and brother, Tim.



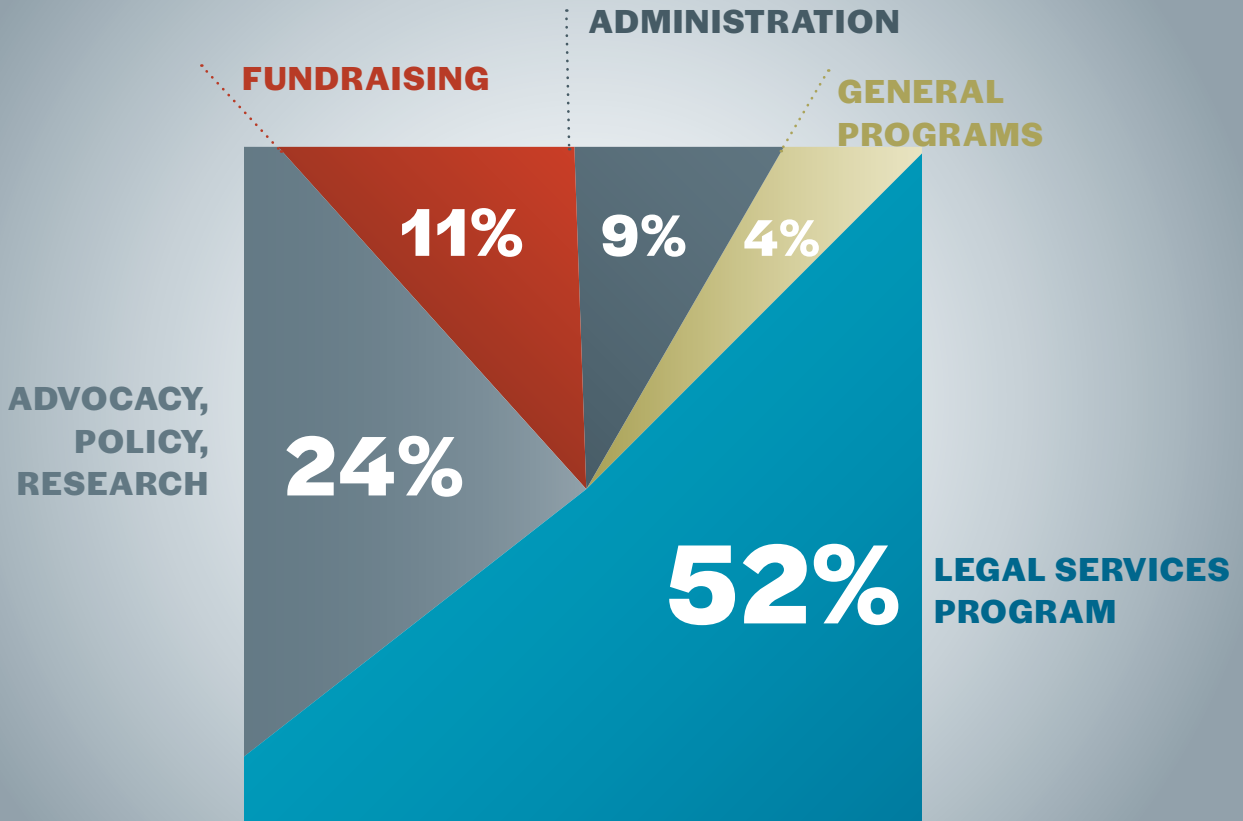
FINANCIALS: 2019

REVENUE

Grants	211,550.00
Contributions	225,975.00
In-Kind*	1,248,627.00
Interest & Dividends	11,726.00
.....	
TOTAL	\$1,697,878.00

**Contributions and pro bono Legal Services*

EXPENDITURES: \$649,344.71



Note: chart reflects cash expenditures only (in-kind not included)

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To view IRS filings please visit www.protectourdefenders.com.



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WWW.PROTECTOURDEFENDERS.COM

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Protect Our Defenders is a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization. The IRS has determined that donations to POD are tax-deductible for the donor as charitable contributions. There are no limits or restrictions on these donations. EIN# 45-4044997