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## HISTORIC PROGRESS & THE ROAD AHEAD

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2022 ANNUAL REPORT

*“There is no better advocacy organization on any issue than POD.”*

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand



***“Protect Our Defenders is the conscience of the movement  
and the watchdog over the Department of Defense.”***

Representative Jackie Speier

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# **“Nancy Parrish has been on a quest to reform military justice for a decade. She’s succeeding.”**

Sarasota Magazine’s 2022 Unity Award Recipient

## **Friends,**

Last November, ten plus years after founding POD, I shared my intention with the board to transition from CEO to board chair. It has been an honor and humbling experience to meet and serve alongside courageous survivors, our team and the numerous volunteers who provide their talents and treasure in the pursuit of justice. The energy and passion shown by this community means more than words can express. I am awestruck by all we’ve been able to accomplish together and particularly proud of the investment made on behalf of survivors both individually and collectively.

I am excited about POD’s next chapter and inspired by the able leadership of our new CEO, Jennifer Elmore who took the helm in 2022, and has not missed a beat. She is an accomplished businesswoman, a survivor, and fierce advocate for justice.

We have accomplished much of what we set out to do when I founded POD in 2011. Removing commanders’ control of the justice system is a huge leap forward. And military leadership acknowledging a culture of rape, misogyny and racial disparity in military justice is an extraordinary accomplishment in and of itself.

Jennifer, the staff, the board and I are looking to the future with a renewed focus on building capacity to support survivors through an expanded pro bono legal network, ensure the effective implementation of hard-won legislated justice reforms and drive culture change.

There is no limit to what we can continue to achieve together. Thank you so much for your partnership.

***In solidarity,***



**Nancy Parrish**, Founder and Board Chair



# POD's Survivor-Led Movement Takes on New Meaning as Jennifer Elmore assumes the Role of CEO

## Jennifer's Story

**In 2015, Jennifer came to POD for help with her own case.**

*"As I look back at my first communications with Nancy and reflect on the impact her words had at that critical juncture... The work done by Protect Our Defenders and attorney Ryan Guilds, (on my behalf) has been beyond what words can convey." Jennifer Elmore, 2018*

As CNN detailed in 2015, Jennifer reported to Army officials that her father, a retired two star General, repeatedly molested and raped her throughout her childhood. The military launched an investigation and found evidence to proceed to trial. Two weeks before the trial, a top military appeals court defied 3 decades of precedent, and found a five-year statute of limitations existed for sexual assault cases in the military. Jennifer's case was dismissed.

**HOPE** Jennifer was devastated. She came to POD for help. Through our legal network, Atty. Ryan Guilds stepped

in and Jennifer pushed for the case to proceed in civilian court for the crimes committed while the family lived in the commonwealth of Virginia.

**JUSTICE** In 2020 a grand jury indicted Jennifer's father, General Graziplene on rape, incest and indecent liberties. COVID delayed the case. Eventually prosecutors offered him a plea agreement. Jennifer supported the agreement stating that she only wanted him to admit what he had done. Graziplene pled guilty to one charge of sexual battery.

Determined she would make a difference for survivors, Jennifer became a victim's advocate and today is POD's Chief Executive Officer.



PHOTO CREDIT: JEREMY M. LANGE



Jennifer holds a photo of her younger self.





***“To be a warrior on behalf of other victims feels highly purposeful to me.”***

## **A SURVIVOR BECOMES POD’S NEW CEO**

An eloquent public advocate for victims’ rights, Jennifer is the recipient of the *U.S. Department of Justice Special Courage Award*. Watch the [US DoJ Video](#) and read the [Press Release](#).

Jennifer’s life experience, her leadership, background, and business skills acquired through a long career in banking, are perfectly suited to POD’s next chapter. In all these endeavors, Jennifer has emphasized collaboration with others in the pursuit of the mission.

***“In addition to leading POD, I’ve become a certified victim’s advocate and an active voice on Capitol Hill. It’s an honor to serve survivors and to lead POD’s next chapter. I hope our work inspires survivors to make change in their own way.”***

From Left: POD’s Adelaide Kahn-Fowler, Survivors United’s Adrian Perry and Kylisha Boyd flanking Attorney Ryan Guilds and POD CEO Jennifer Elmore on Capitol Hill.



# POD's Pro Bono Legal Network (PBN) Affords Survivors The Representation They Deserve



***“Protect Our Defenders is the gold standard. Every day POD provides essential services and advocacy for survivors and fills a critical need as an independent subject-matter expert.”***

Ryan Guilds of Arnold & Porter, Co-founder, POD's Pro-Bono Legal Network

**POD's Pro Bono  
Network is Expanding**

## 2022 LEGAL SERVICES BY THE NUMBERS

**\$1,870,363** IN-KIND PRO BONO SERVICES

**2,069** IN-KIND HOURS

**28** CASES

number of legal referrals/  
in-house cases

**180** PEOPLE

reached out for assistance

**45** SURVIVORS

received other form of assistance  
(including legal advice, resources,  
FOIA requests, etc.)

## NEW LAW REQUIRES VIGILANCE TO ENSURE THE DoD INFORMS VICTIMS OF INDEPENDENT SERVICES SUCH AS POD'S LEGAL NETWORK

The new law “ensures that information on the availability of legal resources from civilian legal service organizations [like POD] is distributed to military-connected sexual assault victims in an organized and consistent manner.” There is push back by DoD. POD will work to ensure proper implementation.



*“Here at POD, we empower victims by ensuring that they can utilize every resource and know every right provided by hard won reforms.”*

*Adelaide Kahn-Fowler,  
POD Director of Programs & Policy*

## POD FILES AMICUS BRIEF IN SUPPORT OF SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVOR

*The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals rules in favor of survivor finding it implausible for sexual assault to be considered ‘incident to military service,’ as the military has argued for decades.*

Retired Col. Kathryn Spletstoser, brought a civil suit against Joint Chiefs’ Vice Chair, General Hyten after the USAF refused to file charges or discipline him for sexual assault.

The USAF settled. The federal government will pay Col. Spletstoser nearly one million dollars. This victory would not be possible without her bravery and tenacity. **The court ruling represents a dramatic shift in how the Feres Doctrine is applied to military sexual assault cases. POD will continue to aggressively pursue ending this Doctrine.** Congress must codify into law the basic right to sue one’s employer if you have been sexually assaulted or harassed while on the job.

*“Spletstoser hopes the successful outcome of the case will embolden other survivors...regardless of what ranking the perpetrator is.”*

*Attorney Ariel Solomon, Washington Post*



# A Huge Victory!

## PERSEVERANCE SECURES REMAINING CRITICAL FIX TO MAJOR OVERHAUL OF MILITARY JUSTICE SYSTEM

In 2022, POD worked tirelessly alongside the indomitable Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and Representative Jackie Speier, to take away key powers that remained with Commanders, thanks to a back door deal that was made during the previous NDAA negotiations.

As reported by Roll Call's John Donnelly, "The new bill would put the finishing and critical touches on the transfer of authority over prosecutions for major crimes from military commanders, where they have long resided, to professional prosecutors who will start work late next year."

***"The most important thing, and it seems so simple,  
is just don't give up, because the day you give up is the day you lose."***

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand



Senator Gillibrand successfully convinces Senate Armed Services Committee chair Senator Jack Reed to support the final justice reform package. PHOTO CREDIT: ROLL CALL



## THIS YEAR POD AND PARTNERS DELIVERED:

### *Random Jury Selections*

Until now, the accused's senior commander had the ability to select the jury thereby putting their thumb on the scale of justice. This legislation now requires a fair process for randomized selection of court-members.

### *A Review of Victims' Discovery Rights*

The military has resisted efforts to give victims access to any evidence, including their own statements and results of forensic examinations. Congress has now directed the Defense Advisory Committee to make such recommendations. POD will work with this Committee to ensure victims gain access to fundamental evidence to properly advocate for holding offenders accountable.

## DRIVING CULTURE CHANGE THROUGH RESEARCH AND HOLDING LEADERSHIP ACCOUNTABLE FOR AN UNHEALTHY WORKPLACE

As reported in USAF Military News: "Recalling discussions that began nationwide after the release of the *Protect Our Defenders [Racial Disparity in Military Justice] Report* and the killing of George Floyd, Webb connected the ensuing dialogue to dignity, respect, and readiness," stating:

*"It felt like a moment in history... It was clear something needed to fundamentally change...*

*Diversity of thought, background, experience—is fundamental,  
it is imperative for the warfighter, for our Airmen."*

**Lt. Gen. Brad Webb (ret.)**

Commander, Air Education and Training Command, Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, TX



PHOTO CREDIT: USAF

# The Work Ahead To Protect and Advance Progress Towards Equity and Justice

*“POD built a movement to successfully upend a broken justice system and culture of denial while providing direct legal help to win cases and transform lives. Now we turn to ensure successful implementation of this new professional and independent system and work to change military culture to ensure equity and equality for all who serve.”*

Paula Coughlin, US Navy Veteran, POD Board Member, Survivor



PHOTO CREDIT: PAULA COUGHLIN (LEFT)

# POLICY PRIORITIES

Despite historic reforms, the epidemic of sexual assault and a toxic culture throughout our military persists. POD is focused on aggressive oversight of new laws and several crucial reforms:

## Ensure Proper Implementation of Laws Establishing New Independent Justice System

We must make certain the military carries out the full spirit of the congressional reforms we fought so hard to achieve.



## Empower Survivors to Pursue Justice

Overturn the toxic “Feres Doctrine” and allow servicemembers to sue their employer the same way civilians can, because rape should *never* be treated as a routine risk in the line of duty.



## Command Climate Accountability

Commanders must be evaluated on the climate they maintain in regard to sexual assault and harassment in their ranks. Those who maintain a toxic climate must be fired.



## Further Professionalize the Justice System by Requiring Career Tracks

Permit military lawyers and prosecutors to finally follow a dedicated career track specializing in court martial practice — allowing them to build the experience required to effectively handle these tough cases (matching the civilian world). Provides the same opportunity as military doctors and pilots.



## Enhance Victims Privacy Rights

Empower victims, to directly appeal flawed judgements that violate their right to privacy, such as the unauthorized release of their mental health records to the CAAF (the military’s highest court).



# POD's Media Engagement Keeps Spotlight on Mission

## 2022 Highlights



DEADLY DELIVERIES: CHILDBIR  
How often do wome...

PASSAGES  
Notable deaths in 20...

U.S. Israel War Sports Entertainment Life Money Tech Travel Opinion

### 'These numbers are tragic': Pentagon leaders concede efforts to curb sexual assault have fallen short

Pentagon officials conceded Thursday that their efforts to combat sexual assault in the military have fallen short.

Protect Our Defenders calls for officials' resignations and works with USA Today reporter Tom Vanden Brook to place external pressure on military leadership.

Univision released the groundbreaking #IAmVanessaGuillen documentary which was produced in partnership with Protect Our Defenders.



### Twice Accused of Sexual Assault, He Was Let Go by Army Commanders. He Attacked Again.

A first-of-its-kind analysis reveals that soldiers in the Army are more likely to be locked up ahead of trial for drug offenses than for sexual assault under a system that gives commanders control.



POD works with ProPublica reporters to press the need for Justice System overhaul.



NEWSLETTERS SIGN IN NPR SHOP DONATE

NEWS CULTURE MUSIC PODCASTS & SHOWS SEARCH

NATIONAL

### A sailor was acquitted of setting a fire. Is it time for military justice reform?

October 25, 2022 · 4:38 PM ET

Heard on All Things Considered

By Steve Walsh

4-Minute Listen

+ PLAYLIST



NPR highlights POD's work to secure military justice reform.



POD provides critical perspective to CBS News. Service members must have the right to sue the military for damages due to being raped while on the job.



# The 2022 Coughlin Courage Award is Presented to...

## **Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand and Rep. Jackie Speier**



Left to right: POD Board Member Paula Coughlin, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, POD CEO Jennifer Elmore

***“I’m honored to receive this award named after such a fierce advocate for justice, Paula Coughlin. There is no better advocacy organization on any issue than POD.”***

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand

***“I deeply appreciate this award named after the courageous Paula Coughlin. Nancy and I stood together in 2011 when we created this organization. POD’s model worked! Protect Our Defenders is the conscience of the movement and the watchdog over the Department of Defense.”***

Congresswoman Jackie Speier

Left to right: Congresswoman Jackie Speier and POD’s Don Christensen



Learn [about the award, Paula Coughlin and past recipients.](#)

# POD's 2022 Justice Award Recipient Provides Hope and Help to Survivors

*Each year, POD honors an attorney or legal team dedicated to helping survivors. It was our great pleasure to bestow POD's 2022 Justice Award to Blair Decker and Hogan Lovells LLP.*

**“Thank you both very much for this award. I appreciate it and am hoping to increase engagement this year!”**

Blair Decker, award recipient

This year alone, Ms. Decker and Hogan Lovells, LLP has facilitated the placement of numerous cases, resulting in \$400,000 of pro bono legal assistance for survivors of military sexual assault. Additionally, the firm made a donation to advance our mission. Beyond the spectacular legal support, Ms. Decker and her colleagues provide survivors the opportunity to regain their voice and power. They truly exemplify what it means to stand with survivors.

Learn about past [Justice Award recipients](#).



# 2022 Financials

## REVENUE: \$2,205,332

Grants	142,000
Contributions	187,511
In-Kind*	1,870,363
Miscellaneous	4,417

*\*Contributions and pro bono Legal Services*

## EXPENDITURES: \$2,307,331

Administrative**	19,858
Fundraising	11,107
Advocacy, Policy Research	118,173
Legal Services Programs	2,158,193

*\*\* POD's CEO and Executive Chair are pro bono*

To view IRS filings please visit [www.protectourdefenders.com](http://www.protectourdefenders.com).



Recognized by GuideStar with Platinum Seal, and the Catalogue for Philanthropy, Washington DC.

*"Protect Our Defenders is an amazing organization. Your work in ending the epidemic of rape and sexual assault in the military is certainly something that is needed in these times.*

*We applaud your mission and all of the workers and volunteers who make up your organization... Thank you for making a difference in the lives of women in crisis."*

**El Segundo Woman's Club**

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**[WWW.PROTECTOURDEFENDERS.COM](http://WWW.PROTECTOURDEFENDERS.COM)**

Protect Our Defenders Foundation 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

