



SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

JAN 25 2023

Airmen and Guardians -

In September 2021, I directed the Department of the Air Force (DAF) Inspector General to investigate allegations concerning improper handling of three domestic violence incidents. The review found areas where resources and processes could be improved to establish trust with those impacted, particularly in the early stages of reporting and law enforcement actions. Over recent months, DAF senior leaders and I have personally engaged with survivors of domestic abuse to listen to their stories and understand their experiences navigating DAF reporting and support services.

Based on the results of this investigation and our conversations, I am now directing a 90-day cross-functional review to comprehensively look at how we investigate and respond to domestic violence cases, increase survivor confidence in leadership, and enhance our survivor support capabilities. Specifically, this includes identification of leader actions that undermine trust; identification of processes and policies that undermine trust; identification of improvements to process and policies that connect all of those involved or affected by domestic violence to care; and where an investigation does not result in criminal prosecution, identification, and analysis for the role of any available command administrative actions.

There is no place in our Air and Space Forces for domestic violence or interpersonal violence in any form. While we have taken important steps to better support domestic violence survivors, we must do more to establish a foundation of trust, integrity, and respect that encourages reporting and engenders confidence in our enterprise. Our increased focus on survivors will advance ongoing efforts to deliver better care and support across the spectrum of interpersonal violence, including survivors of sexual assault and sexual harassment.

There are important initiatives already underway to improve our response to incidents of domestic violence, and I encourage all Airmen and Guardians to take advantage of the services available and share this information widely. For example, we are currently piloting co-location of support services for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and sexual harassment at seven installations. Initial feedback has been positive, demonstrating better experiences for survivors as they navigate their reporting options and support services. Other significant steps include improvements to the application process for transitional compensation for abused dependents, which in certain circumstances provides economic support, medical, and on-base privileges to eligible survivors of domestic violence.

Our ongoing efforts and the cross-functional review will be critical to earning and sustaining the trust of survivors. Importantly, responsibility to address and end domestic abuse in the DAF extends beyond the institution—it is shared by each individual Airman and Guardian. Therefore, I am issuing a call to action to consider how we conduct ourselves, both professionally and personally, and how we can best create a safe and responsive environment for all survivors. We are an institution based on character and integrity, and our actions must reflect that.

Thank you for what you do in defense of this Nation, and for ensuring we support survivors and sustain the trust of all Airmen, Guardians, and loved ones in all that we do.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frank Kendall", is positioned above the printed name.

Frank Kendall