

VERN BUCHANAN
DISTRICT 16, FLORIDA



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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0916

September 21, 2015

General Martin E. Dempsey
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Pentagon, Room 2D920
Washington, DC 20318

Dear General Dempsey:

I urge you to immediately reverse the Pentagon's shameful policy of punishing soldiers who try to stop the sexual abuse of children in Afghanistan, as reported today by the *New York Times*.

According to the *Times*, American soldiers serving our nation in the Army and Marines in Afghanistan have been told to stand down when encountering child sexual abuse perpetrated by local allies. Protecting child predators is abhorrent and inconsistent with our values as a nation. I call on you to end this shameful policy immediately.

It is bad enough if the Pentagon is telling our soldiers to ignore this type of barbaric and savage behavior, but it's even worse if we are punishing those who try to stop it.

The only people who should be punished are the ones who created and condoned this immoral and savage code.

According to the *Times*, Captain Dan Quinn and Sgt. First Class Charles Martland confronted an American-backed Afghan commander "for keeping a boy chained to his bed as a sex slave." Instead of commending Captain Quinn, the Army relieved him of his command. It is now trying to forcibly retire Sergeant Martland as well.

It is deeply troubling that our service members are instructed to ignore child sexual abuse. You must end this policy, which requires Americans to "look the other way" when horrific crimes are committed by our supposed allies.

Fighting in a foreign theater should not require our service members to turn a blind eye towards criminal perversion. Those who wear the uniform of the U.S. military should be commended, not punished, for upholding American values.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Vern Buchanan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "V" and a long, sweeping underline.

Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United States
cc: The Honorable Ash Carter, Secretary of Defense