

Date _____

The Honorable Robert M. Gates
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense
Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Gates,

Greetings and thank you for your dedication and commitment to America's service men and women and their families. During this time in our history when so much is being required of our Armed Forces, they deserve no less than the utmost respect and thanks from each and every one of us. They selflessly give their best to us day in and day out. These men and women of honor and integrity also deserve our best in return.

Several years ago in an effort to ensure our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines had the best environment in which to work and raise their families, the 1996 Military Honor and Decency Act was enacted by Congress, 10 U.S.C. § 2489. The Act banned the sale or rental of "sexually explicit material" on U.S. military installations or in military exchange stores such as AAFES, NEX and MCEX. The statute defines "sexually explicit material" to include recordings, films, videos, periodicals with visual depictions, or materials "produced in any medium, the dominant theme of which depicts or describes nudity, including sexual or excretory activities or organs, in a lascivious way." Congress could not have spoken more plainly when it passed the Military Honor and Decency Act. This type of material is not appropriate or in keeping with the military's values of honor and integrity- core values of every branch of service of the United States Armed Forces.

We were troubled to learn from service members and their families that, despite the law on the books, these types of materials are widely available on U.S. military installations. A survey was conducted of various military bases and we have confirmed that materials prohibited under the Military Honor and Decency Act are being sold. Sadly, it seems true, that the Act is not being enforced by the Department of Defense.

The following is a small sampling of what is prohibited under the law but currently available for sale, according to first-hand witnesses:

Andrews Air Force Base: Playboy, Penthouse, Perfect 10, Playboy College Girls, Nude Playmates, FHM, Celebrity Skin, Playboy's Vixens.

Edwards Air Force Base: Playboy, Playboy College Girls, FHM, Playboy's Vixens.

Fort Bragg: XXX, Playboy College Girls, Perfect 10, Curves, FHM.

Fort Knox: Playboy, Penthouse, Nude, Perfect 10, Playboy's Vixens.

Pearl Harbor: Playboy, Perfect 10.

Pentagon: FHM

United States Military Academy: Perfect 10, Playboy Lingerie, Hot Shots 2007 by Playboy, Playmates in Bed

United States Air Force Academy: Playboy, Lingerie, Playboy's Vixens, Playboy's College Girls, Nude, Perfect 10, Curves

There were very important reasons that motivated Congress to pass the Military Honor and Decency Act. Families and children frequent military exchanges and were exposed to pornography. Sexual harassment experienced by military service women was a major concern. The fact that materials sold in military exchanges predominately depicted sexually exploitive images of females is linked to such harassment. Pornography's destructive impact on individuals and on marriages was a primary concern. Married life combined with the rigors of military life is difficult enough without adding easy access to pornography to the strain. News articles reveal that addiction to pornography is becoming a significant problem among servicemen. There are reports from chaplains that this addiction is becoming a theme among those they counsel. Military law enforcement officials are seeing more service members arrested and/or charged with the sexual abuse of a child. These problems have escalated during the period of non-enforcement of the Military Honor and Decency Act. When it was signed into law, there was overwhelming support for this important legislation because of the evidence demonstrating its necessity.

Military exchanges in the Middle East do not sell sexually exploitive materials out of respect of Middle Eastern values. Yet, while American values also do not support the sexual exploitation of women, respect is not being shown of our own beliefs of honor and integrity for every individual. Even though the law is on the books, the Department of Defense has not enforced it properly.

We, the undersigned, appreciate the opportunity to apprise you of the current situation. We also appreciate your consideration of the concerns outlined in this letter. It would be our hope to meet with you privately at your earliest convenience to learn how we can support an effort to immediately enforce the Military Honor and Decency Act. We believe in your commitment of nothing but the best for our brave service men and women and their families. Please affirm that commitment by enforcing this important law.

Thank you very much. We look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,
Alan E. Sears
Former Executive Director
Attorney General's Commission on Pornography

Bryan Wickens
President
Reclaim Our Culture Kentuckiana, Inc. ("ROCK")
Louisville, Kentucky

Patrick A. Trueman
Former Chief
Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section
U.S. Dept. of Justice

cc:

AAFES: MG Bill Essex, Commander

NEX: Rear Admiral R.E. Crowley, III, Commander

MCX: BG (ret) Michael Downs, Director