

Chairman and Committee Members,

My name is Shania Holmes. I am not able to attend today's hearing because I am a mother of three and expecting my fourth child and will be working during this hearing. I have asked SPC Sheyla Scholl to read this letter on my behalf to the committee in support of HF 295 "Sheyla's Law." In 2017, I was brutally assaulted by the same person that assaulted SPC Scholl. I am the woman who contacted her on social media. I was the reason she reported.

I tried to leave several times, but he would not allow me to. He became employed at the same place I worked, limiting the coworkers I could talk to. He limited the contact between my friends and family. I could not shower without him in the bathroom. He would repeatedly try to impregnate me against my will, often flushing my birth control, intentionally damaging condoms, and laughed when he ejaculated inside of me without my permission.

I had attempted to go to Camp Ripley to report my assault with my sister-in-law. The gate attendant would not allow me to enter the installation and called local police at the gate while I stayed parked. As far as I know, the deputies only called our mutual perpetrator and asked him to leave me alone. There was never any additional follow up. SPC Scholl encouraged me to keep trying to reach out to his chain of command and provided me as many resources as she knew of at the time, but I gave up after being ignored.

In July 2017, I attempted to break up with this individual. He would not allow it. He hit and punched me with such force that I sustained injuries requiring me to wear a neck brace. He broke my phone when I attempted to call my family and the authorities. He forced me to ingest sleeping pills which would lead to my inevitable hospitalization. After realizing what he did, he experienced a sharp mood change and went from wanting me dead to taking me to the hospital. He then left to annual training after this incident, and I broke up with him then, as they would not allow him to come home after he lied about me being in a car accident, which provided cover for me to leave safely.

As a result of this, I am constantly filled with anxiety around men. I looked to SPC Sheyla Scholl's strength after her being vocal about her sexual assault and I thought she could do something before someone else was put in imminent danger like we both were. I was not expecting the investigative process to be so long and traumatic for her as a servicemember. But my statement substantiated her case, as a lot of these things happened to her too.

Chairman, I urge you to vote yes on HF295 because I was raised in a military family. I was taught that they put service to others above themselves for our country. Placing the responsibility on servicemembers to address gaps in the civilian justice system goes way beyond the call to service. Members of the Minnesota National Guard deserve fair and quick sexual assault investigations. Thank you, Chairman.

Shania Holmes