

STATEMENT OF
COLONEL KATHRYN A. SPLETSTOSER
BEFORE THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON
SEXUAL ASSAULT - US V. GEN JOHN E. HYTEN
JULY 23, 2019

Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member Reed, Honorable Senators of the Senate Armed Services Committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to be heard.

My name is Colonel Kathryn Ann Spletstoser and I am a Soldier. I was born and raised in Wisconsin. For the past 28 years of my life, it has been my greatest privilege to be able to serve my country as a soldier. I've deployed and served four combat deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq. I also served as a White House Fellow during President Bush's administration, and later worked closely with the Obama Administration on Afghanistan/Pakistan. Until I was sexually assaulted by Gen Hyten, I had an unblemished record of service.

During my time at STRATCOM, shortly after Gen Hyten arrived we developed a close working relationship and got along very well. I admired and respected him – I looked up to him. I also enjoyed how much he valued me. Over time our close relationship caused problems within the command that I was slow to recognize. At the same time Gen Hyten started to come on to me in early 2017. I was confused and disgusted by this. I tried to forget it happened and hoped that it would just stop. I thought I could manage to make it until I could leave STRATCOM and get away.

Gen Hyten's sexual advances escalated to that awful night in December 2017 in Simi California when he came to my hotel room under the guise of work. Recalling this night is a nightmare for me. He pulled me toward him and started kissing me and pressing and rubbing himself against me. He said "I want to make love to you" and I kept saying that was not going to happen. I tried to get out of his grip but he had his arms wrapped around me so tight – I could not. He started grinding and rubbing his penis against me. And then I realized that he was actually ejaculating in his pants. I pushed very hard and finally got away. I was disgusted and could not believe what just happened. I remember being so angry at him I even called him by his first name John instead of Sir. I asked him why he would do that and what his wife would say about this. He kept asking me "are you going to tell?" I felt violated, disrespected, frightened, and disappointed.

I wish I could go back and do so many things differently with Gen Hyten. Maybe I was not forceful enough the first few times he came on to me? Maybe I should have told someone and gotten help? But my biggest regret is that I did not report him THEN. If I had we would not be here today. If I had not been so afraid of what would happen if I reported it – to me – to him- to his family.... If I had done

the right thing...the DNA from his semen would have been collected from that hotel towel or from my pants or his... Maybe then the Air Force would have prosecuted this case despite the fact that he is a four star general. But instead we are here.

Sir/Ma'am, I apologize to each of you for having to deal with this. I am here today to tell the truth about what Gen Hyten did to me. I could not live with myself if he continued serving on active duty and did this to someone else and I did nothing to stop it. Nothing I do can change the past, but I can do all I can to help make the future right.

I am before you today to respectfully implore you to reconsider his nomination to the second highest position in our military. If he is promoted to vice chairman, it tells every general officer that they are above the law and that victims do not matter and will never see justice or accountability served.

If Gen Hyten's nomination moves forward despite me coming forward with this awful truth, it sends a very dangerous message to sexual assault victims across our military – That even if the investigators determine that there was no evidence to show that the victim was lying – that no one will believe her anyway, so why even bother reporting. That if you are sexually assaulted, by your superior officer, as long as he does it behind closed doors...not only will your perpetrator NOT be prosecuted in a court of law, but he may...just end up getting promoted to an even higher position. I beg of you not to let this happen.

Sir/Ma'am – I am ready to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.