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Governor Sean Parnell STATE OF ALASKA

April 25, 2014

The Honorable Hollis French
Alaska State Senator
State Capitol, Room 504
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator French,

I am in receipt of your March 31, 2014 letter expressing concern with the manner in which sexual assaults are handled in the Alaska National Guard. We clearly share that concern, as I and my Administration have focused on stopping sexual harassment and assaults on all Alaskans since the day I took office, including within our military.

As you know, I have requested an independent assessment from the National Guard Bureau to ensure that the Guard's command structure and processes are responsive, effective, and just. I cannot release specific details that have recently been brought to my attention, as these were confidential, fact-specific conversations. The facts relate to incidents of some years ago, but I still take them seriously. I did, however, relay these concerns to the Guard Bureau's review team.

Your letter said the Chaplains, "... indicated that your administration was told of these problems as far back as the fall of 2010." Did the Chaplains also tell you they were unable to share case-specific detail with our office to substantiate their concerns because of their duty of confidentiality to the individuals they counseled?

Even without detail specific enough to pinpoint a victim willing to report, nor a perpetrator, we made sure through the Adjutant General that Guard members had a safe route to report sexual misconduct, and that their allegations would be taken seriously and investigated to conclusion, including any appropriate penalties. Where criminal conduct was alleged, we directed referral to the appropriate law enforcement agency. I am not aware of victims currently in danger, but we obviously are working to ensure that remains the case.

As my letter dated February 28, 2014, to General Grass indicates, I had recently learned specific details compelling me to write him and request the detailing of a CNGB Complex Investigation Program Investigator. The scope of the Guard Bureau's review has been made public, as have their timelines, and that Guard Bureau review is now ongoing. Discussing the cases while the assessment is ongoing could be detrimental to the assessment team's work, and I will not hinder their efforts. My last letter to you in November on this issue gave details of cases that have been reported.

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Regarding the National Guard Bureau's current review, I am told its report will not be complete for numerous months. Once I have been able to review the report, I will release the non-confidential aspects of the report. As you can understand, the findings of the assessment will determine whether further action is required on our part. My first priority is to protect the victims and to make sure perpetrators are held accountable for their actions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sean Parnell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sean Parnell
Governor