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OSC Resolves Case for Military Civilian Employee Retaliated Against after Reporting Sexual Assault

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON, D.C./August 14, 2018 – The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) has resolved a whistleblower retaliation case for a military civilian employee who was removed from their position and issued a “no contact” order after reporting a sexual assault against one of their subordinates as well as contracting issues. The whistleblower, a military civilian employee, recalls “because I simply did the right thing, lived our Core Values, I became a victim . . . I was isolated and humiliated.”

After receiving this whistleblower’s complaint, OSC conducted an investigation and worked closely with new leadership at the whistleblower’s agency to resolve the case, including restoring the whistleblower’s job and reputation. “OSC evaluated the facts and took actions that will affect my organization for years to come,” the whistleblower says. “I now have a job where I can truly influence the future and advise senior leaders at all levels to make sure there is accountability and respect for those who stand strong and do the right thing.”

As part of its investigation, OSC examined the evidence, reviewed thousands of documents, and interviewed over a dozen witnesses, including an on-site visit to the whistleblower’s Base to meet with individuals having knowledge about the facts underlying the case. According to the whistleblower, it was worth the wait. “I will forever be grateful not only for the hard work, dedication and absolute professionalism of the personnel from OSC . . . but the honest and genuine way they conducted themselves and worked through very difficult issues . . . absolutely extraordinary! They have changed my life and the lives of countless others,” the whistleblower said.

“This employee was unfairly punished for doing what was right and reporting allegations of misconduct,” said **Special Counsel Henry J. Kerner**. “After being effectively demoted and isolated, OSC was able to get them reassigned to their position and made whole.”

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The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) is an independent federal investigative and prosecutorial agency. Our basic authorities come from four federal statutes: The Civil Service Reform Act, the Whistleblower Protection Act, the Hatch Act, and the Uniformed Services Employment & Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). OSC’s primary mission is to safeguard the merit system by protecting federal employees and applicants from prohibited personnel practices, especially reprisal for whistleblowing, and to serve as a safe channel for allegations of wrongdoing. For more information, please visit our website at www.osc.gov.

Last night my organizations senior officer - a General - referred to me as a victim. I never really considered myself a victim...but he is right...I am!

My journey started about a year and half ago when one of my employees told me she had been sexually assaulted. Although I was not the victim of the sexual assault, I became a victim as a Whistleblower. I did exactly what I had been taught in my 30+ year career and what I was morally obligated to do...report the issue as required by regulation. I reported a possible sexual assault by one of our most senior leaders. There was also sexual harassment and possible contract fraud.

Because I simply did the right thing, lived our Core Values, I became a victim. I was removed from my position and given a no contact order. The order directed that I not have any interaction with thousands of people. I was isolated and humiliated. My leadership at the time directed me to keep my mouth shut and my head down. I could not and did not do that! It would have gone against everything I believe in. So...what did I do? I stood up and raised my head high and spoke out. I contacted the Office of Special Counsel. They led efforts that helped to drive change...to right the wrong.

My concern wasn't just for myself, my focus was on driving a change in the culture of the entire organization that would affect thousands of others.

The Office of Special Counsel evaluated the facts and took actions that will affect my organization for years to come. The personnel from the Office of Special Counsel that worked my case actually came to my installation to help facilitate the way forward. Now, I am whole...I believe because of the involvement of the Office of Special Counsel! Although it was not popular and definitely not easy, I am proud of the fact that I was part of changing a culture that was in critical need of being changed. Those that did wrong were held accountable and those that were victimized were reinstated to challenging and rewarding positions. I myself now have a job where I can truly influence the future and advise leaders at all levels to make sure there is accountability for those that need to be held accountable and respect for those who stand strong and do the right thing!

I will forever be grateful not only for the hard work, dedication and absolute professionalism of the personnel from the Office of Special Counsel...but the honest and genuine way they conducted themselves and worked through very difficult issues...absolutely extraordinary! They have changed my life and the lives of countless others!