

SALON.COM RECORDING SAYS MEDICAL PROVIDER PRESSURED TO MISDIAGNOSE SOLDIER'S PTSD

Military's investigation admits potential systemic flaws in how wounded warriors are diagnosed & evaluated NVLSP's Bart Stichman, named in today's Salon.com article, available for interview.

WASHINGTON, DC (April 9, 2009) – A story running today on Salon.com details how a recording that revealed pressure from the military to misdiagnose a soldier's post-traumatic stress disorder, made its way to an outreach worker with the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP), and ultimately, to the upper levels of the Pentagon and the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Sergeant X, the designation given by Salon to the wounded soldier in today's story, is a client of NVLSP's Lawyers Serving Warriors™ project, which provides free legal help to active duty personnel and veterans who served in Iraq or Afghanistan and are facing administrative separation, going through a medical or physical evaluation board, or applying for VA benefits. These proceedings determine the benefits they and their families will receive from the military for life.

Interviews with Sergeant X and his family are not available. Sergeant X is a wounded veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom who is coping with both post traumatic stress disorder and a traumatic brain injury. Sergeant X's disabilities are currently being rated through the military's Physical Disability Evaluation System, and the outcome of that evaluation will impact the lifetime benefits he and his family receive. His family's focus remains on his medical treatment, recovery from his serious injuries, and completion of the disability process.

Bart Stichman, the co-executive director of NVLSP who is named in the story running today on Salon.com, is available for news media interviews. Stichman attended the meetings at the Pentagon with senior army officials to discuss the recording.

"This recording raises serious concerns about the military's treatment of those returning from war with post-traumatic stress disorder," said Stichman. "We tried to engage in a dialogue with the military leadership about the recording, and hoped the military would take the admission of institutional pressure seriously. Instead, we were treated combatively and dismissively by the Pentagon."

Stichman pointed to the military's investigation of the recording, which concluded that no one in the Army did anything wrong, but, inexplicably said: "This investigation finds evidence of potential systemic pressures inherent in the Army physical disability evaluation processes that may influence MEDCOM behavioral health providers in the course of conducting PTSD disability evaluations. These potential pressures may lead providers to avoid making a diagnosis of PTSD on medical boards contrary to their clinical judgment."

Media seeking interviews should contact [Ami Neiberger-Miller](#), 703.887.4877.

Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan) veterans seeking help from Lawyers Serving Warriors™ are urged to visit [LawyersServingWarriors.com](#) and submit information through the "Request Free Legal Help" button on the left side of the screen.

For additional information visit the NVLSP website at: [www.nvlsp.org](#).

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