

space vehicle, a cruise through space for 5 days, landing, and a relaunch for a second landing on the Moon. The mission will then be used to send high resolution images, videos, and other information back to Penn State's mission control center.

To put this in perspective, only the U.S., Russia, India, Japan, and China have ever landed a craft on the Moon. Penn State looks to join this elite club next year.

The Lunar Lion Team includes Penn State science and engineering researchers as well as 80 undergraduate and graduate students in science, technology, engineering, and math programs, commonly known as STEM, as well as communications, business, logistics, computer science, and information technology, just to name a few majors.

The team will have the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in spacecraft design, construction, and operation. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, the team is learning skills necessary for public-private partnerships through collaboration with NASA and commercial space companies.

Like so many of the university's education research initiatives, it will also be used to support new innovations and research in the private sector, real world outcomes that will benefit not just students, but America's competitiveness.

Penn State's bold mission sets the stage for a resurgence of interests in space exploration among America's youth and demonstrates an exciting practical application of STEM education. The team is making great progress towards the mission. Prototype development is underway, and last month, the team commenced rocket testing.

As a Penn State alumnus and a lifelong resident of Centre County, I take great pride in the university and its long list of scholastic and volunteer achievements. The Lunar Lion Team adds another stellar achievement to that list.

The work at the university that has led to the formation and development of this program is another example of innovation and creative leadership on the part of the Penn State community.

As one of the only nonprofit groups working towards the Lunar XPRIZE, and the only university, those working on this Lunar Lion project in State College are truly doing something special.

Mr. Speaker, I want to offer my very best to the Penn State Lunar Lion Team as they continue this important work. Their community and the Nation are very proud.

MILITARY SEXUAL ASSAULT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, before presenting the topic on which I plan to

speak about this morning, I want to take a couple of minutes to talk about the career of the gentleman from New Jersey, Congressman ROB ANDREWS, who leaves this House on February 18 after a remarkable career.

We will be losing an amazing talent, a great intellect, and a fine leader. It has been a great privilege to serve with him and to watch him do his work so ably. We will miss you, ROB.

I now rise, Mr. Speaker, to speak for the 29th time on this House floor about rape in the military. I rise today to speak on a scathing report on military sexual assault by the Associated Press. Sexual assault scandals exposed by the press are the new norm for the military, but this damning report offers us a window into the gross mishandling of sexual assaults at the hands of the chain of command on a massive scale.

This weekend, a deluge of sex crime reports in Japan have been revealed, thanks not to the military disclosing them, but to the Associated Press through FOIA requests. The data reveal how broken the military scales of justice truly are and offers a rare glimpse into how reports of sexual assaults are handled.

Many of these stories involved commanders that undermined investigations, refused to bring a case to court-martial, or overturned a case after a jury had found the perpetrator guilty and sentenced them to jail. Of the 1,000 reports, punishments were wildly inconsistent, and of the suspects determined to be guilty, two-thirds of them spent no time in jail at all. In more than 30 cases, a letter of reprimand was the only punishment. What is truly unacceptable is that we have to rely on FOIA requests at all.

These cases and their outcomes must face the light of day and the scrutiny of the taxpayers that pay for our military in the first place, and I intend to work to make sure that this happens.

What is clear from these cases is that commanders are part of the problem, not the solution. Commanders often decided to not move forward with courts-martial, but when they did—even with DNA evidence and tape-recorded confessions of rape—the predators were typically given mild punishments after pleading to lesser offenses. It is the culture of the military that the rules simply don't apply. Commanders also lessened numerous punishments unilaterally and, in two cases, threw out guilty verdicts and punishments completely.

Among the most disturbing stories in the AP analysis was about a doctor at a health clinic at a Naval Air Facility near Tokyo. Airman Tina Wilson went to the clinic in 2008 to have a dressing changed following surgery on her tailbone. But the doctor, Lieutenant Commander Anthony L. Valasquez, decided it was perfectly okay to slip his hand down the front of her panties and then have the nerve to give her a smile and a wink as she walked out the door.

Wilson complained, an investigation was started, and three other women

also reported the doctor had touched them inappropriately, but after 10 months, the investigation was closed with no action taken, according to an NCIS document on the investigation obtained by the AP.

The story gets even more disgusting. Two years later, the Navy finally filed charges against the doctor after more than 25 women reported he touched them, too. But guess what? Most of the charges were dropped under a plea deal, and the doctor served just a week in the brig. He was dismissed and thankfully stripped of his license, but Valasquez could have been stopped years before. Instead, he was allowed to carry on his lewd behavior and scar so many more victims.

Airman Tina Wilson left the Navy, distraught over how the case was handled, according to the AP analysis. This is another of the thousands of tragedies of how sexual assault victims are treated in the military justice system. They often leave or are forced out after making their reports and enduring a grueling, unjust process. Survivors often face retaliation and punishment while their predators get letters of reprimand.

The retaliation is brutal. Survivors are debased, humiliated, and then discharged by the military they so proudly served because another servicemember raped them or sexually assaulted them.

As we know, there are an estimated 26,000 sexual assaults a year in the military, but reporting is low. Courts-martial are rare, and the conviction rate is less than 1 percent. This is the result of a legal system beholden to the chain of command that some are hell-bent on protecting.

It is time to pass the STOP Act and bring back justice for all servicemembers, especially victims. When will we stop protecting the predators?

FINAL FRONTIERS OF FREEDOM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. SWALWELL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in, again, calling attention to our continued war on poverty, and I thank my colleague and neighbor in California, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, for leading this effort.

This war is, however, but the latest chapter in a larger struggle that goes all the way back to the founding of our country. When we declared our independence in 1776, Thomas Jefferson helped define the purpose and the mission of this new country with his timeless words in that Declaration of Independence. He wrote:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

They endeavored on what was called at the time a freedom experiment. It