

# College sexual assaults targeted

Obama forms task force to find ways to protect students.

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President Barack Obama told the nearly 22 million American women who have been sexually assaulted, "You will never be alone... I've got your back," as he pledged new resources to prevent the crime.

The president turned his focus to college campuses — where women are "at a particular risk of being sexually assaulted."

He signed a presidential memorandum on Wednesday to create a task force to protect students from sexual assault. His action came as he spoke to his White House Council on Women and Girls, which released a report called "Rape

and Sexual Assault: A Renewed Call to Action."

The report said one in five women has been sexually assaulted while in college, and "the dynamics of college life appear to fuel the problem." But only 12 percent of student victims ever report the crime.

"I want to make sure we're doing everything we can to spare another American from sexual assault," Obama said.

## Group has 90 days

The new prevention task force has 90 days to come up with recommendations for colleges to prevent and respond to sexual assault, increase public awareness of each school's track record and enhance coordination among federal agencies to hold schools accountable if they don't confront the problem.

They face a unique challenge because crimes on college campuses are fueled by drinking and drug use. Assaults often occur between two people who know each other and frequently at a party. And campus assailants are often serial offenders, according to the White House report. One study found that of men who admitted to committing rape or attempted rape, 63 percent said they committed an average of six rapes each.

On Ohio campuses, 200 forcible rapes were reported in 2012, according to the Campus Safety and

Security Data Analysis Cutting Tool. That rate is nearly double what it was a decade earlier when 110 forcible rapes were reported.

Local colleges say the increase in incidents could be at least partly attributed to their efforts to educate students about sexual assaults and remove the stigma that surrounds talking about it.

Last year, Miami University created a task force for the prevention of sexual assault, and recommendations from that group included educating students on how they can intervene as a bystander if they see something that concerns them, said Becca Getson, the school's sexual assault response coordinator.

Wright State University held a sexual assault awareness week last November with noted speaker Keith Edwards, whose work focuses on men ending rape, said Katie

Deedrick, director of student support services.

Both universities also have frequent educational sessions in dorms, Greek organizations and student groups on preventing sexual assaults.

These efforts help address the feeling among young adults on college campuses that "bad things aren't going to happen to me," Deedrick said.

Sgt. Patrick Ammon, crime prevention manager at Wright State University, said that education includes striking a balance between students feeling safe on campus and taking steps to protect themselves, such as staying in a group if they are at a party.

"It's hard to find that balance," he said.

Cedarville University, which last year took an uncommon proactive step to announce it was the subject of a federal Title IX inquiry, has taken several steps to address

## SEXUAL ASSAULTS ON OHIO CAMPUSES

President Barack Obama on Wednesday created a task force to respond to sexual assaults on campuses. Here are forcible sexual assaults on campus reported for 2012.

Institution	Sexual Assaults
Ohio State University	21
Miami University	17
Wright State University	12
Wittenberg University	10
University of Cincinnati	7
University of Dayton	7
Xavier University	5
Central State University	1
Clark State Community College	1

Note: No incidents were reported at Cedarville, Urbana and Wilberforce universities and Edison and Sinclair community colleges.

SOURCE: THE CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY DATA ANALYSIS CUTTING TOOL

a claim it did not have "prompt and equitable" grievance procedures to address sexual misconduct complaints.

The university appointed a new Title IX coordinator, conducted more than a dozen campus-wide training sessions last falls, brought in a national expert to advise a task force, and continued to review its own policies, said John Hart, Cedarville's general counsel.

### Military a focus too

The report also declares that the criminal justice response to sexual assault is too often inadequate and lays out a goal of increasing arrest, prosecution and conviction rates without any specific targets. The report blames police bias and a lack of training to investigate and prosecute sex crimes for low arrest rates and says the federal government should promote training and help police increase testing of DNA evidence

collected from victims.

The report mentions the wave of sexual assault in the military — Obama last month gave the Pentagon a year to better prevent and respond to the crime within its ranks or face further reforms. White House officials say they want to set the example by turning around the sexual assault epidemic in the military.

More than 5,000 reports of sexual assault in the U.S. military were filed during the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, compared to the 3,374 in 2012, according to The Associated Press. About 10 percent of the 2013 reports involved incidents that occurred before the victim got into the military, up from just 4 percent only a year ago.

The White House

report calls on every person to help prevent sexual assault.

"...Violence prevention can't just focus on the perpetrators and the survivors," the report says. "It has to involve everyone. And in order to put an end to this violence, we as a nation must see it for what it is: a crime. Not a misunderstanding, not a private matter, not anyone's right or any woman's fault. And bystanders must be taught and emboldened to step in to stop it. We can only stem the tide of violence if we all do our part."