117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R._______

To amend title 46, United States Code, to provide for certain protections against sexual harassment and sexual assault, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

M. ______ introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on ____________________

A BILL

To amend title 46, United States Code, to provide for certain protections against sexual harassment and sexual assault, and for other purposes.

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,  
3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

4 This Act may be cited as the “Safer Seas Act”.

5 SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2101 of title 46, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (45) through (54) as paragraphs (47) through (56), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (44) the following:

“(45) ‘sexual assault’ means any form of abuse or contact as defined in chapter 109A of title 18, or a substantially similar State, local, or Tribal offense.

“(46) ‘sexual harassment’ means—

“(A) conduct that—

“(i) involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or deliberate or repeated offensive comments or gestures of a sexual nature if any—

“(I) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment, pay, career, benefits, or entitlements of the individual;

“(II) submission to, or rejection, of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for decisions affecting that individual’s job, pay, career, benefits, or entitlements;
“(III) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; or

“(IV) conduct may have been by an individual’s supervisor, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or another credentialed mariner; and

“(ii) is so severe or pervasive that a reasonable person would perceive, and the victim does perceive, the environment as hostile or offensive;

“(B) any use or condonation associated with first-hand or personal knowledge, by any individual in a supervisory or command position, of any form of sexual behavior to control, influence, or affect the career, pay, benefits, entitlements, or employment of a subordinate; and

“(C) any deliberate or repeated unwelcome verbal comment or gesture of a sexual nature by any fellow employee of the complainant.”.

(b) REPORT.—The Commandant of the Coast Guard shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and In-
frasstructure of the House of Representatives and the Com-
mittee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the
Senate a report describing any changes the Commandant
may propose to the definitions added by the amendments
in subsection (a).

SEC. 3. CONVICTED SEX OFFENDER AS GROUNDS FOR DE-
NIAL.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 75 of title 46, United
States Code, is amended by adding at the end the fol-
lowing:

“§ 7511. Convicted sex offender as grounds for denial

“(a) SEXUAL ABUSE.—A license, certificate of reg-
istry, or merchant mariner’s document authorized to be
issued under this part shall be denied to an individual who
has been convicted of a sexual offense prohibited under
chapter 109A of title 18, except for subsection (b) of sec-
tion 2244 of title 18, or a substantially similar State, local,
or Tribal offense.

“(b) ABUSIVE SEXUAL CONTACT.—A license, certifi-
cate of registry, or merchant mariner’s document author-
ized to be issued under this part may be denied to an indi-
vidual who within 5 years before applying for the license,
certificate, or document, has been convicted of a sexual
offense prohibited under subsection (b) of section 2244 of
title 18, or a substantially similar State, local, or Tribal
offense.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis for chap-
ter 75 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by add-
ing at the end the following:

“7511. Convicted sex offender as grounds for denial.”.

SEC. 4. SEXUAL HARASSMENT OR SEXUAL ASSAULT AS
GROUNDS FOR SUSPENSION OR REVOCATION.

(a) In General.—Chapter 77 of title 46, United
States Code, is amended by inserting after section 7704
the following:

“§ 7704a. Sexual harassment or sexual assault as
grounds for suspension or revocation

“(a) SEXUAL HARASSMENT.—If it is shown at a
hearing under this chapter that a holder of a license, cer-
tificate of registry, or merchant mariner’s document
issued under this part, within 5 years before the beginning
of the suspension and revocation proceedings, is the sub-
ject of an official finding of sexual harassment, then the
license, certificate of registry, or merchant mariner’s docu-
ment may be suspended or revoked.

“(b) SEXUAL ASSAULT.—If it is shown at a hearing
under this chapter that a holder of a license, certificate
of registry, or merchant mariner’s document issued under
this part, within 10 years before the beginning of the sus-
pension and revocation proceedings, is the subject of an
official finding of sexual assault, then the license, certifi-
cate of registry, or merchant mariner’s document shall be
revoked.

“(c) OFFICIAL FINDING.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In this section, the term
‘official finding’ means—

“(A) a legal proceeding or agency finding
or decision that determines the individual com-
mitted sexual harassment or sexual assault in
violation of any Federal, State, local, or Tribal
law or regulation; or

“(B) a determination after an investigation
by the Coast Guard that it is more likely than
not the individual committed sexual harassment
or sexual assault if the investigation affords ap-
propriate due process rights to the subject of
the investigation.

“(2) INVESTIGATION BY THE COAST GUARD.—
An investigation by the Coast Guard under para-
graph (1)(B) shall include, at a minimum, evalua-
tion of the following materials that, upon request,
shall be provided to the Coast Guard:

“(A) Any inquiry or determination made
by the employer or former employer of the indi-
individual as to whether the individual committed sexual harassment or sexual assault.

“(B) Any investigative materials, documents, records, or files in the possession of an employer or former employer of the individual that are related to the claim of sexual harassment or sexual assault by the individual.

“(3) ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE REVIEW.—

“(A) COAST GUARD INVESTIGATION.—A determination under paragraph (1)(B) shall be reviewed and affirmed by an administrative law judge within the same proceeding as any suspension or revocation of a license, certificate of registry, or merchant mariner’s document under subsection (a) or (b).

“(B) LEGAL PROCEEDING.—A determination under paragraph (1)(A) that an individual committed sexual harassment or sexual assault is conclusive in suspension and revocation proceedings.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The chapter analysis of chapter 77 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 7704 the following:

“7704a. Sexual harassment or sexual assault as grounds for suspension or revocation.”.
SEC. 5. ACCOMMODATION; NOTICES.

Section 11101 of title 46, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(3), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in subsection (a)(4), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”;

(3) in subsection (a), by adding at the end the following:

“(5) each crew berthing area shall be equipped with information regarding—

“(A) vessel owner or company policies prohibiting sexual assault and sexual harassment, retaliation, and drug and alcohol usage; and

“(B) procedures and resources to report crimes, including sexual assault and sexual harassment, including information—

“(i) on the contact information, website address, and mobile application to the Coast Guard Investigative Services for reporting of crimes and the Coast Guard National Command Center;

“(ii) on vessel owner or company procedures to report violations of company policy and access resources;
“(iii) on resources provided by outside organizations such as sexual assault hot-lines and counseling;

“(iv) on the retention period for surveillance video recording after an incident of sexual harassment or sexual assault is reported; and

“(v) additional items specified in regulations issued by, and at the discretion of, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating.”; and

(4) in subsection (d), by adding at the end the following: “In each washing space in a visible location there shall be information regarding procedures and resources to report crimes upon the vessel, including sexual assault and sexual harassment, and vessel owner or company policies prohibiting sexual assault and sexual harassment, retaliation, and drug and alcohol usage.”.

SEC. 6. PROTECTION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION.

Section 2114(a)(1) of title 46, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraphs (B) through (G) as subsections (C) through (H), respectively; and
(2) by inserting after subparagraph (A) the following:

“(B) the seaman in good faith has reported or is about to report to the vessel owner, Coast Guard or other appropriate Federal agency or department sexual harassment or sexual assault against the seaman or knowledge of sexual harassment or sexual assault against another seaman;”.

SEC. 7. ALCOHOL PROHIBITION.

(a) Regulations.—

(1) In general.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall, taking into account the safety and security of every individual on documented vessels, issue such regulations as are necessary relating to alcohol consumption on documented vessels, according to the following requirements:

(A) The Secretary shall determine safe levels of alcohol consumption by crewmembers aboard documented vessels engaged in commercial service.

(B) If the Secretary determines there is no alcohol policy that can be implemented to ensure a safe environment for crew and pas-
sengers, the Secretary shall implement a prohibition on possession and consumption of alcohol by crewmembers while aboard a vessel, except when possession is associated with the commercial sale or gift to non-crew members aboard the vessel.

(2) IMMUNITY FROM CIVIL LIABILITY.—Any crewmember who reports an incident of sexual assault or sexual harassment that is directly related to a violation of the regulations issued under paragraph (1) is immune from civil liability for any related violation of such regulations.

SEC. 8. SURVEILLANCE REQUIREMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Part B of subtitle II of title 46, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“CHAPTER 49—OCEAN GOING NON-PASSENGER COMMERCIAL VESSELS

Sec. 4901. Surveillance requirements.

§ 4901. Surveillance requirements

(a) IN GENERAL.—A vessel engaged in commercial service that does not carry passengers, shall maintain a video surveillance system.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The requirements in this section shall apply to—
“(1) documented vessels with overnight accommodations for at least 10 persons on board—

“(A) is on a voyage of at least 600 miles and crosses seaward of the Boundary Line; or

“(B) is at least 24 meters (79 feet) in overall length and required to have a load line under chapter 51;

“(2) documented vessels of at least 500 gross tons as measured under section 14502, or an alternate tonnage measured under section 14302 as prescribed by the Secretary under section 14104 on an international voyage; and

“(3) vessels with overnight accommodations for at least 10 persons on board that are operating for no less than 72 hours on waters superjacent to the Outer Continental Shelf.

“(c) PLACEMENT OF VIDEO AND AUDIO SURVEILLANCE EQUIPMENT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The owner of a vessel to which this section applies shall install video and audio surveillance equipment aboard the vessel not later than 2 years after enactment of the Safer Seas Act, or during the next scheduled drydock, whichever is later.
“(2) LOCATIONS.—Video and audio surveillance equipment shall be placed in passageways on to which doors from staterooms open. Such equipment shall be placed in a manner ensuring the visibility of every door in each such passageway.

“(d) NOTICE OF VIDEO AND AUDIO SURVEILLANCE.—The owner of a vessel to which this section applies shall provide clear and conspicuous signs on board the vessel notifying the crew of the presence of video and audio surveillance equipment.

“(e) ACCESS TO VIDEO AND AUDIO RECORDS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The owner of a vessel to which this section applies shall provide to any Federal, state, or other law enforcement official performing official duties in the course and scope of a criminal or marine safety investigation, upon request, a copy of all records of video and audio surveillance that the official believes is relevant to the investigation.

“(2) CIVIL ACTIONS.—Except as proscribed by law enforcement authorities or court order, the owner of a vessel to which this section applies shall, upon written request, provide to any individual or the individual’s legal representative a copy of all records of video and audio surveillance—
“(A) in which the individual is a subject of the video and audio surveillance;

“(B) the request is in conjunction with a legal proceeding or investigation; and

“(C) that may provide evidence of any sexual harassment or sexual assault incident in a civil action.

“(3) LIMITED ACCESS.—The owner of a vessel to which this section applies shall ensure that access to records of video and audio surveillance is limited to the purposes described in this paragraph and not used as part of a labor action against a crew member or employment dispute unless used in a criminal or civil action.

“(f) RETENTION REQUIREMENTS.—The owner of a vessel to which this section applies shall retain all records of audio and video surveillance for not less than 150 days after the footage is obtained. Any video and audio surveillance found to be associated with an alleged incident should be preserved for not less than 4 years from the date of the alleged incident. The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Coast Guard are authorized access to all records of video and audio surveillance relevant to an investigation into criminal conduct.
“(g) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ‘owner’ means the owner, charterer, managing operator, master, or other individual in charge of a vessel.

“(h) EXEMPTION.—Fishing vessels, fish processing vessels, and fish tender vessels are exempt from this section.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of chapters for subtitle II of title 46, United States Code, is amended by adding after the item related to chapter 47 the following:

“49. Oceangoing non-passenger commercial vessels .......... 4901”.

SEC. 9. MASTER KEY CONTROL.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 31 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“§ 3106. Master key control system

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The owner of a vessel subject to inspection under section 3301 shall—

“(1) ensure that such vessel is equipped with a vessel master key control system, manual or electronic, which provides controlled access to all copies of the vessel’s master key of which access shall only be available to the individuals described in paragraph (2);

“(2) establish a list of all crew, identified by position, allowed to access and use the master key and
maintain such list upon the vessel, within owner
records and included in the vessel safety manage-
ment system.

“(3) record in a log book, located in a central-
ized location that is readily accessible to law enforce-
ment personnel, information on all access and use of
the vessel’s master key; and

“(4) make the list under paragraph (2) and the
log book under paragraph (3) available upon request
to any agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation,
any member of the Coast Guard, and any law en-
forcement officer performing official duties in the
course and scope of an investigation.

“(b) Prohibited Use.—Crew not included on the
list described in subsection (a)(2) shall not have access
to or use the master key unless in an emergency and shall
immediately notify the master and owner of the vessel fol-
lowing use of such key.

“(c) Requirements for Log Book.—The log book
described in subsection (a)(3)—

“(1) may be—

“(A) electronic;

“(B) included in the vessel safety manage-
ment system; and

“(2) shall include—
“(A) dates and times of access;

“(B) the room or location accessed; and

“(C) the name and rank of the crew member that used the master key.

“(d) PENALTY.—Any crew member who uses the master key without having been granted access pursuant to subsection (a)(2) shall be liable to the United States Government for a civil penalty of not more than $1,000 and may be subject to suspension or revocation under section 7703.

“(e) EXEMPTION.—This section shall not apply to vessels subject to section 3507(f).”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis for chapter 31 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“3106. Master key control system.”.

SEC. 10. SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS.

Section 3203 of title 46, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (5) and (6) as paragraphs (7) and (8); and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following:
“(5) with respect to sexual harassment and sexual assault, procedures for, and annual training requirements for all shipboard personnel on—

“(A) prevention;
“(B) bystander intervention;
“(C) reporting;
“(D) response; and
“(E) investigation;
“(6) the log book required under section 3106;”;

(2) by redesignating subsections (b) and (c) as subsections (c) and (d), respectively; and

(3) by inserting after subsection (a) the following:

“(b) PROCEDURES AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS.—In prescribing regulations for the procedures and training requirements described in subsection (a)(5), such procedures and requirements shall be consistent with the requirements to report sexual harassment or sexual assault under section 10104.”.

SEC. 11. REQUIREMENT TO REPORT SEXUAL ASSAULT AND HARASSMENT.

Section 10104 of title 46, United States Code is amended by striking paragraphs (a) and (b) and inserting the following:
“(a) MANDATORY REPORTING BY CREW MEMBER.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—A crew member of a documented vessel shall report to the Secretary any complaint or incident of sexual harassment or sexual assault of which the crewmember has first-hand or personal knowledge.

“(2) PENALTY.—A crew member with first-hand or personal knowledge of a sexual assault or sexual harassment incident on a documented vessel who knowingly fails to report in compliance with paragraph (a)(1) is liable to the United States Government for a civil penalty of not more than $5,000.

“(3) AMNESTY.—A crew member who fails to make the required reporting in paragraph (a)(1) shall not be subject to the penalty described in paragraph (a)(2) if the complaint is shared in confidence with the crew member directly from the assaulted individual or the crew member is a victim advocate as defined in section 12291 of title 34, United States Code.

“(b) MANDATORY REPORTING BY VESSEL OWNER.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—A vessel owner or managing operator of a documented vessel or the employer of a seafarer on that vessel shall report to the Secretary any complaint or incident of harassment,
sexual harassment, or sexual assault in violation of employer policy or law, of which such vessel owner or managing operator of a vessel engaged in commercial service, or the employer of the seafarer is made aware. Such reporting shall include results of any investigation into the incident, if applicable, and any action taken against the offending crewmember.

“(2) PENALTY.—A vessel owner or managing operator of a vessel engaged in commercial service, or the employer of a seafarer on that vessel who knowingly fails to report in compliance with paragraph (b)(1) is liable to the United States Government for a civil penalty of not more than $25,000.

“(c) REPORTING PROCEDURES.—

“(1) A report required by subsection (a) shall be made as soon as practicable, but no later than 10 days after the individual develops first-hand or personal knowledge of the sexual assault or sexual harassment incident to the Coast Guard National Command Center by the fastest telecommunication channel available.

“(2) A report required under subsection (b) shall be made immediately after the vessel owner, managing operator, or employer of the seafarer gains knowledge of a sexual assault or sexual har-
assessment incident by the fastest telecommunication channel available, and such report shall be made to the Coast Guard National Command Center—

“(A) the nearest Coast Guard Captain of the Port; or

“(B) the appropriate officer or agency of the government of the country in whose waters the incident occurs.

“(3) A report in subsections (a) and (b) shall include, to the best of the reporter’s knowledge—

“(A) the name, official position or role in relation to the vessel, and contact information of the individual making the report;

“(B) the name and official number of the documented vessel;

“(C) the time and date of the incident;

“(D) the geographic position or location of the vessel when the incident occurred; and

“(E) a brief description of the alleged sexual harassment or sexual assault being reported.

“(4) After receipt of the report made under this subsection, the Coast Guard will collect information related to the identity of each alleged victim, alleged perpetrator, and witness through means designed to
protect, to the extent practicable, the personal identifiable information of such individuals.

“(d) REGULATIONS.—The requirements of this section are effective as of the date of enactment of Safer Seas Act. The Secretary may issue additional regulations to implement the requirements of this section.”.

SEC. 12. CIVIL ACTIONS FOR PERSONAL INJURY OR DEATH OF SEAMEN.

(a) PERSONAL INJURY TO OR DEATH OF SEAMEN.—

Section 30104 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by inserting “, including an injury resulting from sexual assault or sexual harassment,” after “in the course of employment”.

(b) TIME LIMIT ON BRINGING MARITIME ACTION.—

Section 30106 of title 46, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the section heading by striking “for personal injury or death”;

(2) by striking “Except as otherwise” and inserting the following:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as otherwise”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(b) EXTENSION FOR SEXUAL OFFENSE.—A civil action under subsection (a) arising out of a maritime tort for a claim of sexual harassment or sexual assault shall
be brought not less than 5 years after the cause of action
for a claim of sexual harassment or sexual assault arose.”.

(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis for chap-
ter 301 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by
striking the item related to section 30106 and inserting
the following:

“30106. Time limit on bringing maritime action.”.

SEC. 13. EXEMPTION FROM REQUIREMENT TO OBTAIN
MARINER LICENSE.

Section 51309 of title 46, United States Code, is
amended by adding at the end the following:

“(d) EXEMPTION FROM REQUIREMENT TO OBTAIN
LICENSE.—The Secretary may modify or waive the re-
quirements of section 51306(a)(2) for students who pro-
vide reasonable concerns with obtaining a merchant mar-
iner license, including fear for safety while at sea after
instances of trauma, medical condition, or inability to ob-
tain required sea time or endorsement so long as such in-
ability is not due to a lack of proficiency or violation of
Academy policy. The issuance of a modification or waiver
under this subsection shall not delay or impede graduation
from the Academy.”.

SEC. 14. PROTECTION OF CADETS FROM SEXUAL ASSAULT
ONBOARD VESSELS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 51322 of title 46, United
States Code, is amended—
(1) by striking subsection (a) and inserting the following:

“(a) SAFETY CRITERIA.—The Maritime Administrator, after consulting with the United States Coast Guard, shall establish—

“(1) criteria, to which an owner or operator of a vessel engaged in commercial service shall adhere prior to carrying a cadet performing their Sea Year service from the United States Merchant Marine Academy that addresses prevention of, and response to, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking; and

“(2) a process for collecting pertinent information from such owners or operators and verifying their compliance with the criteria.

“(b) MINIMUM STANDARDS.—At a minimum, the criteria established under subsection (a) shall require the vessel owners or operators to have policies that address—

“(1) communication between a cadet and an individual ashore who is trained in responding to incidents of sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking;

“(2) the safety and security of cadet staterooms while a cadet is onboard the vessel, including the installation of functional door locks and policies pro-
hibiting shipboard personnel from entering cadet staterooms;

“(3) requirements for crew to report complaints or incidents of sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking consistent with the requirements in section 10104;

“(4) the maintenance of records of reports of sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking onboard a vessel carrying a cadet;

“(5) the maintenance of records of sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking training as required under subsection (f);

“(6) a requirement for the owner or operator provide each cadet a copy of the policies and procedures related to sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking policies that pertain to the vessel on which they will be employed; and

“(7) any other issues the Maritime Administrator determines necessary to ensure the safety of cadets during Sea Year training.

“(c) SELF-CERTIFICATION BY OWNERS OR OPERATORS.—The Maritime Administrator shall require the
owner or operator of any commercial vessel that is carrying a cadet from the United States Merchant Marine Academy to annually certify that—

“(1) the vessel owner or operator is in compliance with the criteria established under subsection (a); and

“(2) the vessel is in compliance with the International Convention of Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 (32 UST 47) and sections 8106 and 70103(c).

“(d) INFORMATION, TRAINING, AND RESOURCES.—The Maritime Administrator shall ensure that a cadet participating in Sea Year—

“(1) receives training specific to vessel safety, including sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking prevention and response training, prior to the cadet boarding a vessel for Sea Year training;

“(2) is equipped with a satellite communication device and has been trained on its use;

“(3) has access to a helpline to report incidents of sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking that is monitored by trained personnel; and

“(4) is informed of the legal requirements for vessel owners and operators to provide for the secu-
rity of individuals onboard, including requirements under section 70103(e) and chapter 81.”;

(2) by redesignating subsections (b) through (d) as subsections (e) through (g), respectively;

(3) in subsection (e), by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following:

“(2) ACCESS TO INFORMATION.—The vessel operator shall make available to staff conducting a vessel check such information as the Maritime Administrator determines is necessary to determine whether the vessel is being operated in compliance with safety criteria developed pursuant to subsection (a).

“(3) REMOVAL OF STUDENTS.—If staff of the Academy or staff of the Maritime Administration determine that a commercial vessel is not in compliance with the criteria established under subsection (a), the staff—

“(A) may remove a cadet of the Academy from the vessel; and

“(B) shall report such determination of non-compliance to the owner or operator of the vessel.”;

(4) in subsection (f), as so redesignated, by striking “or the seafarer union” and inserting “and the seafarer union”; and
(5) by adding at the end the following:

“(h) NONCOMMERCIAL VESSELS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—A public vessel (as defined in section 2101) shall not be subject to the requirements of this section.

“(2) REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION.—

The Maritime Administrator may establish criteria and requirements that the operators of public vessels shall meet to participate in the Sea Year program of the United States Merchant Marine Academy that addresses prevention of, and response to, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.”.

(b) REGULATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Maritime Administrator may prescribe rules as necessary to carry out the amendments made by this section.

(2) INTERIM RULES.—The Maritime Administrator may prescribe interim rules necessary to carry out the amendments made by this section. For this purpose, the Maritime Administrator in prescribing rules under paragraph (1) is excepted from compliance with the notice and comment requirements of section 553 of title 5, United States Code. All rules prescribed under the authority of the amendments
made by this section shall remain in effect until su-
perseded by a final rule.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Sea year compliance.—Section 3514 of
the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal
Year 2017 (46 U.S.C. 51318 note) is repealed.

(2) Access of academy cadets to DOD safe
or equivalent helpline.—Section 3515 of the
National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year
2018 (46 U.S.C. 51518 note) is amended by striking
subsection (b) and redesignating subsection (c) as
subsection (b).