

JILL N. TOKUDA

2ND DISTRICT, HAWAII

WASHINGTON DC OFFICE:
1027 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-1102
(202) 225-4906

DISTRICT OFFICE:
1001 BISHOP STREET
ASB TOWER SUITE 1503
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
(808) 746-6220

<http://tokuda.house.gov>



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1102

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION, RESEARCH,
AND BIOTECHNOLOGY
(RANKING MEMBER)
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NUTRITION AND
FOREIGN AGRICULTURE
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS
SELECT COMMITTEE ON
THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY

January 12, 2026

Col Robert Merrill, Chair
Joint Service Committee on Military Justice
Department of Defense
Washington, D.C.

Dear Col Merrill: *Robert*

I write to request that the Joint Service Committee on Military Justice review and recommend to the President an increase in the maximum sentence for voluntary manslaughter under Article 119 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). Under the 2024 Edition of the Manual for Courts-Martial, the maximum sentence for voluntary manslaughter is confinement for not more than 15 years. This maximum sentence has fallen behind that of many states. For example, the maximum sentence for voluntary manslaughter or the equivalent crime is up to 20 years in Georgia, Hawai'i, Massachusetts, and Texas; up to 25 years in New York; up to 30 years in the District of Columbia, Florida (if a weapon is used), Illinois, and Maine; up to 48 years in Colorado; and up to life in prison in Washington State.

This issue came to my attention because of a truly horrifying case at Schofield Barracks, Hawai'i, in the Second Congressional District, which I represent. In July 2024, nineteen-year-old Mischa Johnson went missing, never to be seen alive again. PFC Dewayne Arthur Johnson II, her husband, admitted to killing her and her unborn child with a machete, dismembering them with a chainsaw, and placing the remains in a dumpster on Schofield Barracks. On June 3, 2025, he pled guilty to voluntary manslaughter, obstruction of justice, and making false official statements, and he was sentenced to 23 years in prison for these combined crimes as part of a plea agreement.

Considering the perpetrator's horrific actions to kill his wife and unborn child and cover up his crime through gruesome and unconscionable acts, this sentence seems insufficient. I fear that prosecutors seeking justice were undermined in their ability to impose more stringent consequences by the comparatively low maximum sentence for voluntary manslaughter under the UCMJ. The much higher limits in many states provide for justice in the most egregious circumstances, like the fate that befell Ms. Johnson.

While nothing can be done about PFC Johnson's sentence now, your committee has the power to recommend updates to maximum sentences for offenses under the UCMJ to deliver justice for victims in the future. I strongly urge the Joint Service Committee to recommend to the President a significant increase to the maximum penalty for voluntary manslaughter to ensure that the most

heinous and remorseless actions yield the highest sentences. That is the least that we can do for Mischa Johnson and her family.

Thank you for considering my request, and for your commitment to a fair and effective military justice system for our service members, military families, and the broader public.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "JN", is positioned above the printed name.

Jill N. Tokuda
Member of Congress