

# Combat veteran sues Maryland over harassment complaint shelved during deployment

*Federal complaint alleges Maryland corrections officials placed an officer's harassment investigation "in abeyance" due to her deployment and never resumed it.*

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, June 12, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A former Maryland correctional officer and decorated combat veteran filed a [federal civil rights lawsuit](#) today against the State of Maryland, the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, and her former supervisor, alleging that the State suspended her internal sexual harassment investigation because of her military deployment, never resumed it, and retaliated against her when she pressed for answers.

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*Attorney Jordan D. Howlette*

According to the [complaint](#), filed in the United States District Court for the District of Maryland, Janae C. Dorman

served as a Correctional Officer II at Eastern Correctional Institution from April 2017 until August 2024. Court documents state that, in April 2022, Dorman filed a formal written sexual harassment complaint against her direct supervisor, reporting unwanted sexual propositions, comments on her appearance, and unconsented physical contact. The complaint alleges that no investigator ever contacted her despite repeated follow-up requests.

In July 2022, Dorman deployed overseas under federal military orders, serving in Kuwait, Jordan, and Syria, where she came under enemy fire and was awarded the Combat Action Badge. According to the complaint, in October 2022 a deputy director of the Department's Office of Equal Employment Opportunity confirmed in writing that Dorman's complaint had been "held in abeyance due to your deployment, and will be reinstated and thoroughly investigated."

The complaint alleges that the investigation was never reinstated. Rather, when Dorman returned to duty in October 2023, the Department placed the supervisor she had accused back on her shift, again in a position of authority over her. It also denied her request to transfer based on seniority, court documents state, even as it approved transfers for officers with less seniority,

and the Department did not respond to her renewed written complaints.

The complaint further alleges that in March 2024, the supervisor positioned himself at the facility's entry gatehouse and observed Dorman as she partially disrobed to complete the mandatory entry screening, an incident documented in written statements by multiple witnessing officers. According to court documents, a senior facility official subsequently directed that the investigative records of the incident be destroyed, stating that Dorman had "probably filed up the road"—a reference, the complaint alleges, to an anticipated external civil rights complaint. The complaint states that a lieutenant refused the directive, preserved the original records, and contemporaneously documented the order.

Dorman alleges that she submitted an emergency complaint to the Department's equal employment office on March 22, 2024, and received no response for 76 days. She further alleges that the cumulative effect of the Department's conduct rendered her working conditions intolerable and that she was constructively discharged on August 23, 2024.

"Janae Dorman answered our country's call, came under enemy fire, and came home to discover that her own employer had used her service against her," said Attorney Jordan D. Howlette, who represents Dorman in the lawsuit. "Maryland put her complaint on a shelf because she deployed, put her harasser back in charge of her shift, and ordered the evidence destroyed according to records preserved by an officer of conscience. No servicemember should ever pay that price for wearing the uniform."

The lawsuit asserts claims under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA), 38 U.S.C. §§ 4301–4335, which prohibits employers from denying benefits of employment on the basis of military service; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; and the Maryland Fair Employment Practices Act. The complaint seeks, among other things, compensatory and liquidated damages under USERRA's willful-violation provision, and equitable relief, including workforce training on USERRA and anti-harassment obligations.



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June 11, 2026

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The case is Janae C. Dorman v. State of Maryland, et al. (Case No. 1:26-cv-02344-SAG), pending in the United States District Court for the District of Maryland. Dorman is represented by Jordan D. Howlette of [Justly Prudent](#).

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