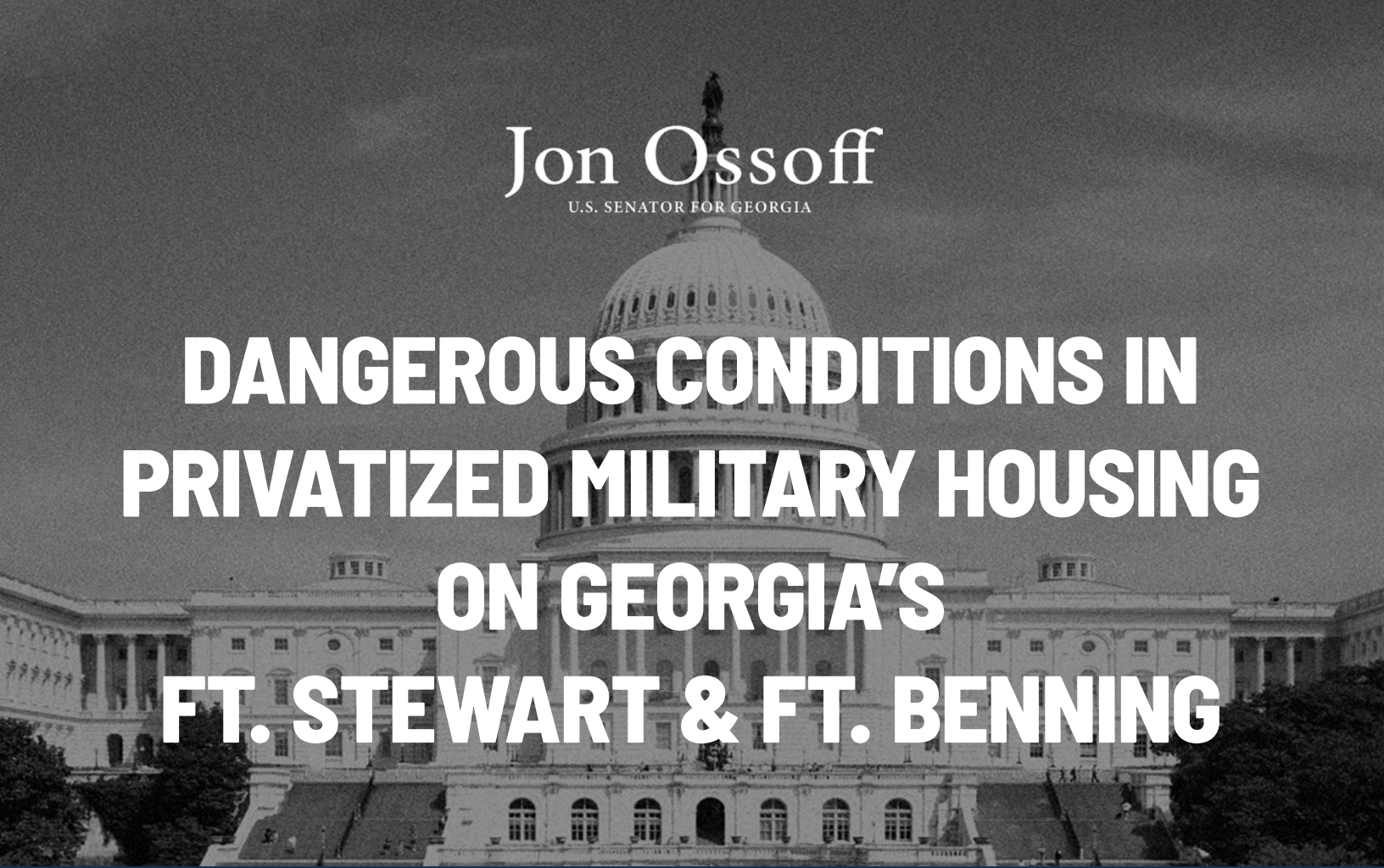




Jon Ossoff
U.S. SENATOR FOR GEORGIA

DANGEROUS CONDITIONS IN PRIVATIZED MILITARY HOUSING ON GEORGIA'S FT. STEWART & FT. BENNING

U.S. Senator Jon Ossoff led an investigation into substandard conditions affecting military families living in privatized housing at Ft. Stewart and Ft. Benning. This report focuses on original accounts from impacted military families, including lead exposure affecting newborn health, severe mold contamination leading to emergency room visits, flooding in living areas, and more.

Prepared by Staff of Senator Jon Ossoff

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I. Executive Summary

In 2022, U.S. Senator Jon Ossoff led an 8-month bipartisan investigation into substandard conditions affecting military families living in privatized housing on Fort (Ft.) Gordon in Georgia, uncovering mistreatment and neglect of families that put their health at risk. Balfour Beatty executives, impacted servicemembers and advocates testified before Senator Ossoff's subcommittee in the course of that investigation. The U.S. Army subsequently committed to conducting home-by-home inspections of housing on military installations nationally, including at Ft. Gordon.¹ After hearing additional concerns from military families living at Ft. Stewart and Ft. Benning, the Senator's office began to investigate conditions in privatized housing at these military installations through interviews with a sample of military families.

Eyewitness accounts indicate that families living on Ft. Stewart and Ft. Benning continue to face substandard conditions, leading to dangerous health impacts for military families. Credibly reported conditions include lead exposure affecting newborn health, severe mold contamination leading to emergency room visits, flooding in living areas, fire hazards including HVAC fires and gas leaks, severe pest infestations in kitchen and eating areas, and HVAC failures creating extreme temperatures. Many of the families interviewed reported that housing conditions directly impacted their physical health leading to symptoms such as skin rashes, reduced lung function, allergies, chronic sore throats, fatigue, rashes, sleep apnea and breathing difficulties resulting in emergency room visits.

1 Press release, "Ft. Gordon: Following Senator Ossoff's Push, Unit-by-Unit Privatized Housing Inspections to Begin on Tuesday, April 11," (Mar. 31, 2023), <https://www.ossoff.senate.gov/press-releases/ft-gordon-following-sen-ossoffs-push-unit-by-unit-privatized-housing-inspections-to-begin-on-tuesday-april-11/>.

II. Background

In 2019, Congress initiated a comprehensive investigation into privatized military housing nationwide, exposing hazardous living conditions like toxic mold, lead paint, and rodent infestations, as well as fraudulent maintenance logs by private contractors.² This triggered sweeping legislative overhauls and new oversight authorities within the FY20 National Defense Authorization Act.³ However, in the ensuing months, credible reports shared with Sen. Ossoff’s office indicated that the problems persisted,⁴ leading to Senator Ossoff’s 8-month bipartisan investigation in 2022, which uncovered mistreatment and neglect of families living in privatized military housing on post at Ft. Gordon.

Following up on those findings, in June 2025, Senator Ossoff launched a further inquiry to identify hazards to military families at Army installations in Georgia beyond Ft. Gordon. The Senator’s staff interviewed a sample of military families at Ft. Stewart and Ft. Benning regarding their experiences living in privatized military housing.

In May 2026, during a hearing about funding priorities for military construction projects, Senator Ossoff pressed for a commitment from the U.S. Army to improve privatized housing and hold contractors accountable.⁵ The Senator continues to investigate military housing operations to ensure transparency and to protect military families living on military bases in Georgia.

2 Schneyer, Joshua and Pell, M.B., “Senate hearings to probe unsafe housing of U.S. military families,” REUTERS (Jan. 30, 2019), <https://www.reuters.com/article/world/senate-hearings-to-probe-unsafe-housing-of-us-military-families-idUSKCN1PO37E/>

3 Schneyer, Joshua, “U.S. Congress approves sweeping military housing overhaul,” REUTERS (Dec. 17, 2019), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-military-bill/u-s-congress-approves-sweeping-military-housing-overhaul-idUSKBN1YL2C5/?il=0>

4 Sy, Stephanie, “Families sound alarm on toxic mold in military housing,” PBS NEWSHOUR (Apr. 28, 2026), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/families-sound-alarm-on-toxic-mold-in-military-housing>

5 Press release, “WATCH: Sen. Ossoff Continues Working to Improve Privatized Housing for Military Families,” (May 15, 2026), <https://www.ossoff.senate.gov/press-releases/watch-sen-ossoff-continues-working-to-improve-privatized-housing-for-military-families/>

III. Findings

Since June 2025, the Senator’s office has received multiple credible reports of substandard housing conditions affecting individuals and families at Ft. Stewart and Ft. Benning in Georgia. Half of the families interviewed reported malfunctioning or absent major home appliances, which in some cases led to temperatures exceeding 80 degrees in the home, leaking HVAC units, and dishwashers that did not drain. One Ft. Benning family stated:

“How comfortable would anyone that is running this business or [who has lived] in these homes be with actually moving their own families in and living there long-term? If I worked there, I would not want to move my family in.”

The below accounts represent an illustrative sample of the types of concerns faced by military families, including mold contamination, exposure to lead and asbestos, plumbing issues, water damage, pest infestations, appliance issues, and electrical failures.

SEVERE MOLD AND MILDEW CONTAMINATIONS:

The Senator’s staff received credible reports of homes contaminated by mold and/or mildew, which in some cases reportedly led to serious medical harm to children. In some circumstances, housing contractors reportedly delayed remediation or entirely failed to remediate contaminations after being notified of concerns.

- One Ft. Stewart family reported that their daughter missed nearly half the school year due to mold-related illness that resulted in multiple emergency room visits. The family stated that their daughter’s symptoms would improve when staying away from the house but return upon coming back. The family reported that within three weeks of being relocated, visible mold appeared in the HVAC closet.
- At Ft. Benning, one family reported that their basement repeatedly flooded when it rained despite numerous requests for remediation. The flooding reportedly led to mold issues that the family said took a month to address. The family also stated that maintenance staff “only authorized minimal repairs” instead of fixing the underlying water intrusion problem.
- A family at Ft. Benning reported significant health problems due to exposure to mold in

their home, including respiratory issues, reduced lung function, allergies, chronic sore throats, fatigue, hives, rashes, and sleep apnea. The family reported that their youngest daughter required a sleep study and ultimately a tonsillectomy after developing sleep-disordered-breathing. The family also reported that the husband was diagnosed with cholinergic urticaria, a condition that causes hives. The husband reported that his allergist suspects he has systemic mastocytosis, a rare blood disorder that can cause daily flare-ups each day and increase the risk of anaphylaxis. The family described:

“Living in unsafe conditions took a significant toll on my family. Instead of feeling safe in our home, we spent months worrying about the health effects of mold exposure and whether our concerns would be taken seriously. To this day, we do not feel our concerns were truly heard, and if they were, we have yet to see how the response helped our family. It is difficult to put into words the impact our living situation at Fort Benning has had on our children.”

- Another family living at Ft. Benning reported continuous water intrusion leading to mold growth in the primary bathroom where the floor became “squishy.” The family stated that “a maintenance supervisor attempted to cover it up, claiming there was no mold.”
- A family at Ft. Benning reported that they discovered a slow water leak behind their fridge a few months after moving into their unit, causing mold to grow on their fridge, kitchen cabinets, and kitchen items. The family reported that it took maintenance staff several days to come to the house to fix the leak but did not address the mold. The family reported that they called maintenance three to four times a week for multiple weeks to address the mold before finally escalating the situation to the housing office. The family describes their experience:

“Within three months of living in my new base housing assignment, I had dealt with safety issues, appliance malfunctions, and health issues. While standing in the driveway using the garden hose to attempt to save my kitchen items from the mold that [the housing company] refused to address, I wondered if my family and I were truly welcome at Fort Benning.”

LEAD AND ASBESTOS EXPOSURE:

The Senator’s staff received multiple credible reports of homes containing lead and asbestos. One family reported that their newborn baby had elevated lead levels.

- A Ft. Benning family’s premature newborn was reported to have elevated lead levels after two weeks of residence in their home, prompting the family to terminate their lease and pay over \$1,000 to be moved to a different house on-base. During the initial lease signing, the

family reported that the housing company told them the home “could have lead.” Upon move-in, a housing supervisor allegedly stated that there was so much lead in the house that their baby could not crawl on floors or play outside because lead was “dripping off the house” and contaminating the surrounding soil.

PLUMBING ISSUES:

The Senator’s staff received credible reports of homes experiencing significant plumbing issues and substandard repairs conducted by privatized housing companies. In some circumstances, repairs were reportedly performed numerous times only for the identical problem to reoccur.

- At Ft. Stewart, a family reported that they had poor water pressure for months. According to the family, Balfour Beatty provides only “temporary fixes” rather than addressing underlying problems and fails to invest in proper replacements.
- A Ft. Benning family reported they had to call maintenance staff five times to address a malfunctioning dishwasher, which was causing “water damage and paint bubbles in the basement.”
- Another Ft. Stewart family reported that Balfour Beatty’s poor maintenance caused their drains to require constant unclogging and that the family had poor water pressure for months, reportedly affecting multiple homes in their neighborhood.

PEST INFESTATIONS:

The Senator’s staff received credible reports of homes with pest infestations. Families have experienced insects swarming their homes and appliances as well as mice chewing through wiring.

- At Ft. Benning, one family reported a German cockroach infestation in their home shortly after moving in. They stated the cockroaches were living inside kitchen appliances including the oven, dishwasher, and refrigerator, making the kitchen unusable for food preparation. The family’s daughter, enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP), a government program which provides support to families with special needs, reportedly developed rashes and breathing issues from cockroach exposure that required medical attention. According to the family, a professional pest control service confirmed that the infestation predated the family’s residency period.

- Another Ft. Benning family reported that mice had chewed through electrical wiring in their stove and oven, creating a fire hazard and requiring replacement of the appliances. The family also reported that the private housing company only replaced the appliance after the family sent in video evidence that captured the fire hazard, despite the family finding evidence in a prior tenant's work orders that the fire hazard had already been reported.
- A different Ft. Benning family reported multiple pest-related issues. The wife reported that she waited for over a week for a pest control technician to visit the house to address a termite infestation in their home.

ELECTRICAL FAILURES:

The Senator's staff received credible reports of electrical failures. Families have reported various electrical hazards including exposed wiring in basements, malfunctioning circuits, and electrical fires caused by water damage.

- One Ft. Benning family experienced two separate electrical fires. In both instances, a leak from the upstairs bathtub reportedly led to the downstairs fire alarm system short-circuiting and catching on fire.
- Another Ft. Benning family reported that multiple outlets throughout their home did not work. The family also reported that numerous appliances in the home were malfunctioning due to underlying electrical issues in the home.