



October 16, 2023

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chairman
Senate Committee on Armed Services
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Armed Services
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Chairman
House Committee on Armed Services
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Committee on Armed Services
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, Chairman Rogers, and Ranking Member Smith,

As the House and Senate conferees negotiate the final National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 (NDAA), we write in strong opposition to the inclusion of any provisions that attack access to reproductive health care and fertility treatments in the final bill. Inclusion of such provisions could jeopardize the final passage of this important legislation.

We specifically urge the removal of Sec. 716 of the House-passed NDAA. This provision would: repeal the October 20, 2022, Department of Defense (DOD) memorandum titled “Ensuring Access to Reproductive Health Care,” prohibit DOD from using funds to implement the memorandum or potential successor memorandums, and amend 10 U.S.C. §1093 to prohibit the Secretary of Defense from paying for or reimbursing fees or expenses for DOD health care providers to obtain a health care license in a state for the purpose of providing abortion services.

Women—including women service members—already face steep barriers to accessing reproductive health care. According to the RAND Corporation, approximately 46 percent of women currently serving in America’s active-duty military are stationed in a state with no access or severely restricted access to abortion care. Reproductive health care is essential health care, and it shouldn’t be further restricted or used as a bargaining chip in any form in the NDAA conference process.

We ask you all to stand up for our service women’s freedom just as they have for our freedom. Thank you for your work on this important bill.

Sincerely,



Lois Frankel
Chair
Democratic Women's Caucus



Teresa Leger Fernández
Vice Chair
Democratic Women's Caucus



Nikema Williams
Vice Chair
Democratic Women's Caucus