

Senator Jerry Moran
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Mike Bost
Chairman
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Mark Takano
Ranking Member
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Moran and Bost, and Ranking Members Blumenthal and Takano,

The undersigned organizations write in support of the joint Congressional Review Act (CRA) resolution, H.J. Res. 144 and S.J. Res. 103, that would overturn the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) final rule formalizing a near-total abortion ban at VA. All abortion bans are harmful, but VA's extreme ban strips even exceptions for survivors of sexual assault, incest, and those whose health would be endangered by pregnancy. We are deeply concerned about the impact this ban will have on veterans and their loved ones.

On December 31, 2025, the Trump administration finalized a rule that prohibits abortion counseling for VA beneficiaries in all circumstances and denies abortion care to veterans and their loved ones, except in the narrow circumstance in which a VA health care provider certifies that the life of the pregnant person would be endangered. The new rule rescinds a critical policy that had been in effect since September 2022. The previous policy allowed veterans and eligible family members to access abortion care through VA in cases of rape, incest, and life or health endangerment of the pregnant person.

As an increasing number of women, as well as transgender and non-binary service members, transition to veteran status, VA must be prepared to provide care, including abortion care, for all veterans. However, this rule will cause chaos and confusion among providers who must decide whether a veteran is close enough to death to obtain care.¹ We have seen the consequences of similar bans across the country as patients have waited to get the emergency abortion care they need - sometimes suffering fatal consequences as a result.²

The final rule not only severely restricts the ability to obtain an abortion, but also prohibits VA providers from talking to their patients about abortion. Comprehensive pregnancy options counseling, including abortion counseling, is critical for patients to get the information they need

¹ *Why doctors say the 'save the mother's life' exception of abortion bans is medically risky*, ABC News (June 13, 2022) at <https://abcnews.com/Health/doctors-save-mothers-life-exception-abortion-bans-medically/story?id=84668658>.

² *Are Abortion Bans Across America Causing Deaths? The States That Passed Them Are Doing Little to Find Out*. ProPublica (Dec. 18, 2024) at <https://www.propublica.org/article/abortion-bans-deaths-state-maternal-mortality-committees>.

to make informed decisions about their health care. Under this ban, however, even veteran survivors of sexual assault will no longer be able to access abortion counseling at VA - a particularly cruel decision given that many veterans have experienced military sexual trauma in addition to harassment and discrimination at VA facilities.³

Veterans already face unique and complex health care challenges, which often include recovery from combat or service-related trauma, mental health issues, and military sexual assault. Like all of us, they deserve access to abortion care so they can make their own decisions about their bodies, lives, and futures. We strongly support the joint CRA that would overturn this extreme ban and we urge Congress to pass this critical legislation.

Sincerely,

All* Above All

American Association of People with Disabilities

American Association of University Women (AAUW)

American Society for Reproductive Medicine

Center for Reproductive Rights

Community Catalyst

Guttmacher Institute

Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America

Human Rights Campaign

Human Rights Watch

Ibis Reproductive Health

Justice and Joy National Collaborative

League of Women Voters of the United States

Minority Veterans of America

National Abortion Federation

³ Women Veterans: The Journey to Mental Wellness, DAV (2024) at <https://www.dav.org/wp-content/uploads/Women-Veterans-Study-2024.pdf>.

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum

National Council of Jewish Women

National Institute for Reproductive Health

National Network of Abortion Funds

National Organization for Women

National Partnership for Women & Families

National Women's Law Center Action Fund

National Women's Political Caucus

Physicians for Reproductive Health

Planned Parenthood Federation of America

Population Connection Action Fund

Power to Decide

Pregnancy Justice

Reproductive Freedom for All

Service Women's Action Network (SWAN)

Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine

SPARTA Pride