



June 13, 2016

The Honorable Mark S. Kirk
Chairman
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
125 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jon Tester
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
125 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles W. Dent
Chairman
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives
HVC-227, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sanford D. Bishop, Jr
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives
HVC-227, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Kirk and Dent and Ranking Members Tester and Bishop:

On behalf of the 1.7 million members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) and our Auxiliaries, I would like to offer the VFW's strong support for the expansion of fertility treatment options for veterans who have lost their ability to have children as a direct result of their service-connected injuries.

Due to the widespread use of improvised explosive devices during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, thousands of service members and veterans, both female and male, have suffered from spinal cord, reproductive, urinary tract and other injuries that render them incapable of having children without medical assistance. Many of these veterans hope to one day start families, but their injuries prevent them from conceiving. When these veterans seek fertility treatment from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), they are told VA services are very limited. In fact, VA is prohibited from providing certain fertility treatments, such as In vitro fertilization.

The Senate version of H.R. 2577, the *Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act*, would end this injustice by authorizing VA to provide fertility treatments and counseling, including treatment using assisted reproductive technology, to veterans and their spouses if the veteran has a service-connected condition that results in the veteran being unable to procreate without the use of such fertility treatment. The non-partisan

NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

Congressional Budget Office has estimated some 3,500 female veterans and another 3,000 spouses of veterans would use these health services if they were available.

It is unacceptable that these veterans are now required to incur tens of thousands of dollars in debt to start a family or forgo having children altogether simply because VA is prohibited from treating their service-connected infertility. As members of the Conference Committee considering this important funding bill, we urge you to ensure this important section remains in the conference agreement.

Thank you for your dedication and continued work to improve the lives of veterans and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert E. Wallace". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue horizontal line.

ROBERT E. WALLACE
Executive Director
VFW Washington Office

cc: Members of the Conference Committee on the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017