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Supporting Military Women and Families Through Policy

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As violence against women has increased and the COVID-19 pandemic continues, more and more flaws and areas that are lacking in the Department of Defence are being recognized. The foundation of the Department of Defence (Military) is the same as the country; it is patriarchal. Additionally, the civilians that authorize the military, either by command or funds, are often old white men with little to no understanding of inclusivity. This patriarchal system continues to risk the safety of women in service and by extension military families.

The United States of America is known around the world for its military strength; politicians and civilians alike praise the military and demand that the utmost respect and honor is placed upon it at all times. How can the U.S. Armed Forces be worthy of such honor when sexual assault is such a strong issue? How can the U.S. Military be praised when women still don't have adequate access to birth control? By expanding on this thought, how can military families succeed when there is little regard for women rights?

According to a 2020 report published by Military OneSource, there are over 1,000,000 DoD Active Duty military personnel, over 40,000 DHS's Coast Guard Active Duty members, over 1,000,000 DoD Ready Reserve and DHS Coast Guard Reserve, almost 200,000 members of the Retired Reserve, and a little over 6,000 members in the Standby Reserve.¹ These numbers do not include civilian personnel.

When breaking down the demographics further, the Army has the largest number of Active duty personnel at ~481,000 members. The Navy follows behind at ~431,000 members. The Air Force and Space Force are combined at ~329,000 members, and the Marine Corps has

¹ 2020 Demographics Profile

the least members at ~180,000 members.² While these numbers may seem large, and they are by no means insignificant, only 17.2% (~229,000) of the DoD Active Duty force is represented by Women. This is an eye opening difference compared to the over 1,103,000 (82.8%) men who are currently serving in the DoD Active Duty force.³

In regards to children and families, there are over 2,000,000 military personnel and over 2,500,000 family members (spouses, children, and adult dependents). Almost 32% of military personnel are married with children, ~15.7% are married without children, and ~5.7% are single with children. Of the almost 1,000,000 military spouses, almost 25% are between the ages of 31-35, while just over 20% of spouses are age 26-30. Further, the largest age group of military children is between birth and 5 years at about 37% of the 1,620,000 military children in 2020. The next largest age group is 6-11 years at ~32.3%, 12-18 years at ~24.1%, and 19-22 years at ~6.4%.⁴

By examining a history of military service in the context of women and families, as well as the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), other related bills, and resources there is hope that women and dependents will be treated better going forward and we can begin to understand and modernize our Department of Defence

History

For as long as there has been conflict there have been spouses, children, and communities that serve and make sacrifices. During America's wartime from 1775-1991 there have been 41,892,128 U.S. Military Service members, 651,031 Battle deaths, 308,800 In-Theater deaths,

² 2020 Demographics Profile

³ 2020 Demographics Profile

⁴ 2020 Demographics Profile

230,254 Non-Theater deaths, 1,430,290 wounded.⁵ The Department of Veterans Affairs had done extensive work on not only recording the number of service members who have served during major conflicts, injuries sustained, deaths (combat related or other), but the Department has also had records of the last veteran, widow, and dependent that has passed from the American Revolution, the War of 1812, the Indian Wars, the Mexican American War, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, and World War I. The Department of Veterans also published U.S. and Dependents who received benefits during the Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, the Korea Conflict, the Vietnam Era, the Gulf War, and Peacetime.⁶

During the American Revolution, women provided support to the Armed services by serving as nurses, cooks, seamstresses, and water bearers. Some women even served as spies to aid American troops. These roles for women expanded over time, even though women did not have an official position with the military. Towards the end of the 1800s, there were about 1,500 civilian women who served as nurses in Army hospitals during the Spanish-American War.⁷

From that point on, women were able to access more administrative roles. The first 20 nurses in the Navy were known as the “Sacred Twenty” for breaking barriers in Military service. During World War I over 35,000 women served across the branches and over 400 were killed in action.⁸

While the above information gives insight into the number of Americans who have served our country and sacrificed their lives, women were not officially allowed to serve in the military until 1948. Three years after World War II, President Harry Truman signed the *Women’s*

⁵ America’s Wars

⁶ America’s Wars

⁷ DACOWITS

⁸ DACOWITS

Armed Services Integration Act. While the Act allowed women to permanently serve in the Armed Forces, it restricted the number of women that could serve. When the bill became law, women could only account for 2% of each branch. Further, even fewer women could serve as officers, they were immediately discharged if they became pregnant, and they weren't allowed to command men or serve in combat roles.⁹ When the Korean War began, 120,000 women would serve in active duty positions from 1950-1953. However, women were still not allowed to serve in combat roles. Instead, women took jobs as engineers, military police officers and nurses.

During the Vietnam Era, President Lyndon B. Johnson opened promotions allowing female service members to general and flag ranks. Women became allowed to serve as clerks, intelligence officers, and air traffic controllers. Women were even granted the ability to command units men were in. After the Vietnam War ended, the Pentagon released a statement announcing that pregnant women could continue to serve in the military.¹⁰ While these changes seem to be for the better when it comes to women's rights in the Armed Services, the effects of previous laws and attitudes still affect women to this day.

On April 04, 2021, Representative Julia Brownley introduced H.R. 2385, the *Justice for Women Veterans Act*. This Act would require the Government Accountability office to conduct a study looking into the women who were forcibly discharged from service due to pregnancy during the Korea and Vietnam years.¹¹ Representative Brownley stated, "The unfair practice of discharging women from the military because they became pregnant or became a mother was not only wrong but it perpetuated a harmful cycle of gender prejudice... My goal is to identify

⁹ DeSimone, 2021

¹⁰ DeSimone, 2021

¹¹ Brownley, 2021

disparities in access to care and benefits for women veterans and, where necessary, introduce, advocate for, and pass legislation that fixes those gaps."¹²

Since women have served in the Armed Forces there has been a history of their bodily autonomy being taken away from them. It began with being discriminated against and discharged from service if they became pregnant, to limiting the careers they would pursue and their ability to rise in the ranks, to current hot topic issues like sexual assault, sexual harassment (SASH) and access to birth control.

Currently, the big case that is regularly discussed when it comes to the safety of women in the Military is that of Spc. Vanessa Guillen. Vanessa's murder drew world wide attention to the treatment of women in the Armed Services. "Army investigators found that Guillén was sexually harassed by a superior noncommissioned officer in her unit, according to the report. She "informally reported that she was sexually harassed on two occasions, and in both instances her supervisor failed to report the harassment, and other leaders failed to take appropriate action," officials said"¹³ After her report of sexual assault she disappeared and was found murdered. The handling of this case has brought to light shortcomings the military has when it relates to sexual harassment, especially at Fort Hood.

When it comes to the lives of children in the military, they can at times be overlooked. Because of the environment in which they are raised and the potential for toxicity to spread there can be additional challenges these children face that others don't.

Agenda Setting

¹² Pawlyk, 2021

¹³ Britzky, 2021

To understand the policy options, it is critical that they understand the issue first. To put it plainly, women are not treated equally within the military community, they are subject to their bodily rights taken away, and these actions have the potential to greatly impact families in the military community. Military women and families are not often talked about on a day to day basis because some of the challenges they face are invisible to the outside community. Recently, the First Lady, Dr. Jill Biden, announced that the Biden Administration would do more to support the “Hidden Helpers” and the children of Military caregivers.¹⁴ Terms like caregiver, parental leave, and childcare are often gendered and when the greater public hears these words they often associate them with a woman's responsibility. That is why it is key to highlight childcare, education, and children's issues with women's issues. The demand and weight of these challenges often falls on the woman, therefore it is important to discuss them as such.

It is often that childcare falls under the responsibility of women. If it weren't seen as a gendered job and shared equally between both parents, this issue of childcare in the military would be seen as a greater issue. It is often that fathers are showered with praise for simply being a father. Women, on the other hand, are criticized, shamed, judged, disregarded when it comes to making decisions about their bodies and children. This issue has been present for generations and still affects women to this day.

In 1973, the Supreme Court's decision to recognize the constitutional right to abortion with *Roe v. Wade* made it easier for women to access abortions. Additionally, it reaffirmed that women have the right to decide what happens with their bodies. However, since then, states have enacted hundreds of laws that restrict a woman's right to abortions. Health clinics have been

¹⁴ Kheel, 2021

forced to shut down and women have been attacked when they try to enter clinics for care.¹⁵

Currently, one in four women in the military experience military sexual assault (MST)¹⁶ and are judged and shamed for reporting or getting an abortion if needed. The trauma and stigma attached to MST can have lasting effects.

It is nearly impossible to have a conversation about women's rights to abortion and birth control without acknowledging families. Would a woman or family be able to support a child if it were born? Would the parents be able to get time off work to spend with the baby? In November of 2021, the United States Marine Corps released an article stating “Our organization, processes, and approach to personnel and talent management are no longer suited to today’s needs and incompatible with the objectives of Force Design 2030”. In this article the USMC will “seek to secure the necessary departmental and statutory authorities to increase the duration of parental leave for both primary and secondary caregivers. For the primary caregiver, we will seek an expansion of leave for up to one year in length.... Second, until those authorities are obtained, we will authorize primary and secondary caregivers to take additional parental leave when they agree to extend their service contracts.”¹⁷ This willingness to create change is significant because it is coming directly from the USMC, rather than legislators or government officials, this concept additionally recognizes both primary and secondary caregivers, and understands that if the family unit is taken care of the Marine Corps will ultimately be more effective in their mission.

While acknowledgement of women's rights and family care is slow, but coming within the branches, some democratic Members of Congress are putting forward bills that look at the

¹⁵Act for Women

¹⁶NBC Universal News Group, 2019

¹⁷Talent Management

issue of women's rights in the military from a holistic perspective while others across the aisle have voiced their opposition. The topic of defense is usually a bipartisan issue, in the sense that the NDAA gets passed every year and most, if not all, Members of Congress support military personnel and their families. When this issue of birth control in the military is mentioned it immediately becomes a moral and branding issue.

When looking at bills that have been introduced by both democrats and republicans, there is a divide in which areas of the military community are supported when it comes to children and families. Bills put forward by republicans are centered towards the education of children in military families rather than the parents or family as a unit explicitly. A reason for this is to show support for families and the military, which is a strong republican value, while avoiding the hot button issues. Examples of this are H.R. 499, *Education Savings Accounts for Military Families Act of 2021*, introduced by Representative Jim Banks and H.R. 625, the *Military Child Educational Freedom Act* introduced by Representative Joe Wilson. H.R. 499 “directs the Department of Education (ED) to establish a program to provide children with parents on active duty in the uniformed services with funds to pay educational expenses.”¹⁸ Similarly, H.R. 625 “modifies the requirements for tax-exempt Coverdell education savings accounts to permit members of the Armed Forces serving on extended active duty or their spouses to use the accounts for certain education expenses incurred in connection with a home school that provides elementary or secondary education.”¹⁹ However, it is important to note that spouses are often recognized. House Resolution.783, *Recognizing Military Spouses of the United States of*

¹⁸ Banks, 2021

¹⁹ Wilson, 2021

America, introduced by Congresswoman Herrell, recognizes the sacrifices that Military spouses make as well as the strength that they display.²⁰

Comparatively, democrats tend to introduce bills that, when put together, address the myriad of challenges that both women and their families face on a day to day basis.

Representative Jackie Speier has introduced bills that begin with “*Access to Contraception for Service Members*” (H.R. 2709)²¹ to “*Service Member Parental Leave Equity Act*”²² (H.R. 3122) to “*Military Child Care Expansion Act of 2021*”²³ (H.R. 3121).

In addition to Congresswoman Speier, Representative Brownley has introduced four major bills, not only surrounding women rights in the military, but families as well.

Representative Brownley introduced H.R. 2502, the *Equal Pay for Service Women Act*, which aims to ensure action is taken to reduce gender related inequalities in uniform cost²⁴ and H.R. 2385, which would enact a commission to look into women who were involuntarily separated from the Armed Forces due to pregnancy.²⁵ Together these bills highlight the historic inequities and discrimination women have faced while serving in the military.

Currently there are organizations that support the military community through a variety of issues. It is essential that Congress not only gather information directly from the Department of Defence but additional resources that have experience and a deeper understanding of the challenges faced. One resource that offers a variety of resources as well as information on the military community, children in military families, as well as confidential and legal help for

²⁰ Herrell, 2021

²¹ Speier, 2021

²² Speier 2021

²³ Speier 2021

²⁴ Brownley, 2021

²⁵ Brownley, 2021

service members is Military OneSource.²⁶ through this resource both policy makers and service members can gain access to relevant and essential information.

Another resource that isn't as wide reaching in terms of what it offers, but is critical none the less is Arts in the Armed Forces. Arts in the Armed Forces "honors and enriches the lives of the US military community by offering powerful shared experiences in theater and film. Featuring professional artists and contemporary American content, we create space for meaningful dialogue, igniting connection and deepening our capacity for understanding around our common humanity."²⁷ By experiencing the art provided an environment is created where service members can not only reflect on their own trauma and experience but share that experience with their loved ones.

Not only is legislation needed when attempting to create a more equal Armed Services, but adequate resources are also essential to endure that when changes in the Service are taking place, the military personnel and their families are taken care of as well.

Policy Options

The issue of descrimination against women and families is still as present as it was when women were discharged from service for getting pregnant. Currently, hot topic issues like abortion, birth control, sexual assault, and childcare are tossed back and forth by both sides of the aisle while women suffer the consequences. This is largely due to the polarization in partisan politics.

²⁶ Support for Military Personnel and Families

²⁷ Arts in the Armed Forces

While there are many individual bills that address specific needs of the military community, there is no one bill that would solve all of the issues that surround women's rights in the military as well as support for military families. In part, this is because it is not only a legal issue, but a community issue. About one in four women will experience Military Sexual Trauma (MST)²⁸ One in four military children experience depression, one in five military children experience academic problems, and media coverage of wars increases the stress response in children making it more difficult for them to cope with a parent being deployed.²⁹

There is such a strong emphasis that military children are strong and resilient. So much emphasis can be placed on these characteristics that policy makers, the military community, and even parents can forget that they are still just children. The children in this community can additionally be ignored when parents are suffering from invisible wounds as well.³⁰

The first step to adequately addressing the above issues is combining bills like H.R. 3792, *Services and Trauma-informed Research Outcomes in Neighborhoods Grants for Support for Children Act of 2021* or *STRONG Support for Children Act of 2021*, introduced by Representative Ayanna Pressely to establish grant programs for government health departments to prevent childhood trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)³¹, H.R.1801, *CHAMPVA Children's Care Protection Act of 2021*, introduced by Representative Julia Brownley to ensure that every child dependent has access to medical care until their 26th birthday³², and H.R. 2709, *Access to Contraception for Servicemembers and Dependents Act of*

²⁸ NBC Universal News Group, 2019

²⁹ Sogomonyan, 2020

³⁰ Army.mil, 2015

³¹ Pressely, 2021

³² Brownley, 2021

2021, introduced by Representative Jackie Speier to ensure that members of the Armed Forces and their families have access to contraceptives “to promote health and readiness for all members of the Armed Forces”.³³

While this option would address a fraction of the needs of children and families, it is insufficient in tackling women's rights, not only on an individual level but a community level as well. A second step would be to strengthen modernization and reform sections in the NDAA to include additional provisions to combat MST within the community, conduct research on the effects of trauma on multiple fronts (MST, discrimination, ACEs, and family separation), education, and healthcare. It is important to see all of these issues as interconnected rather than separate. If sections pertaining to this issue were strengthened and to stay in the NDAA there is a greater chance that the matters at hand could be seen as interconnected rather than separate issues that need to be addressed individually.

It is critical that Congress not only look to the Department of Defense for change, but to look at associated resources. These resources have the potential to be great stepping stones for growth and change to occur. Resources like Military OneSource and AITAF, for example, do great work, however, service members and their families are not often knowledgeable until it is too late. By Congress partnering with resources a mutually beneficial relationship can occur. Congress can gain various perspectives on issues surrounding the military community and resources might be able to access more people in need of services.

In this Congress, the National Defense Authorization act for Fiscal Year 2022 (H.R. 4350), introduced by Representative Adam Smith includes 10 key sections (SEC. 513, 521, 524,

³³ Speier, 2021

527, 529, 529C, 529D, 531-539D, 539G-J, and 541-546) on women's issues, mainly surrounding sexual assault and 13 key sections (SEC. 513, 519E, 527, 529, 529C, 529D, 569E, 569F, 577, 624, 2814, 7304, 7326) on military children and families³⁴. These sections are vital because the NDAA will always get passed. There is always a chance that essential sections supporting women and children's rights will get taken out of the bill when it gets to the Senate, however, this is likely their best chance at passing change.

One major challenge when it comes to enacting change with any community, especially the military community, is that there are always going to be rules, opinions, procedures, and time. Change on this issue will not come quickly. It is not possible to force the military to do something it is not ready to do, especially when there isn't a consensus from Congress.

However, listening is one act that can be taken to aid in change occurring is making the rights of women in service and children in military families a bipartisan issue. While some Members of Congress support bills introduced from the other side of the aisle, not all so. As mentioned previously, there is usually a consensus for supporting the military. It is critical that all Members of Congress support legislation that would directly make the military community a safer place for women as well as support research that benefits children and families and that cannot happen without taking the time to listen to one another and think critically about the issues at hand.

Assessment of Efficacy

Out of the steps listed above to solve the policy issue, the best to reinforce the *National Defense Authorization Act* to ensure that proper measures are being put in place to support and

³⁴ NDAA FY2022

protect women as well as support the larger military community by taking care of its children. The NDAA has the potential to approach the matter from a holistic perspective and identify multiple key issues at once rather than being forced to address each issue in an individual bill and hope that it gets passed. Of course, each amendment that goes into the NDAA has to be voted on, however, there is a greater chance that provisions concerning this matter will pass Congress if it is moved in a group rather than on its own.

Because the NDAA is so large and there is room for so much, there is opportunity for thoughtful discussion surrounding the issues presented. Not all issues can be solved immediately and negotiations on this matter will be challenging, however, if this policy option were to succeed we would see the cases of MST go down, we would see the severity of mental health struggles in children decrease, and trauma support structures to increase.

While the idea of Congress partnering, on some level, with third-party resources in addition to the Department of Defence on the policy issues at hand, it is not likely that this will be a fruitful relationship. While resources like Military OneSource would be a great resource for Congress to access information and have some sort of relationship because Military OneSource is already through the Department of Defence, AITAF is not. While AITAF provides a valuable service to the military community and it is knowledgeable on certain topics, it does not conduct research and would probably not want to be subjected to government oversight.

Policy makers would be able to see that change is occurring when cases of MST are lowered, when women have equal rights within the Armed Forces (cost of uniform, ability to serve in combat roles, access to all birth control options), when women in the military stop getting killed for reporting harassment, when the children of military families are not struggling

a severely with mental health challenges, or when school start actively supporting children in military families (by providing resources for coursework or a trauma-informed curriculum). The above policy options would get the United States military to be a little safer for women, children, and the people they swore to protect.

Conclusion

Women's rights and that of children and families is an extremely large issue and an incredibly large one to tackle. When looking at each of these issues they can be broken down into almost a million more. However, it is essential that each issue is looked at within the context of the other. Since the COVID-19 pandemic started, and arguably since the Trump Presidency, it seems that there has been a lot of reflection on what the country was doing with certain groups and how they were handling issues. With movements like #MeToo, it was clear that the systemic issue surrounding women's rights was not going away. When children came home from school during the pandemic, people soon realized that quality education and child care was an issue that many faced in this country.

While access to all forms of contraception is still an issue, so are other components of starting a family like parental leave and childcare. H.R. 2709, *Access to Contraception for Servicemembers and Dependents Act of 2021*, sponsored by Representative Jackie Speier aims to “ensure that members of the Armed Forces and their families have access to the contraception they need in order to promote the health and readiness of all members of the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.”³⁵

³⁵ Speier, 2021

In the United States, we live in a secular country and have no official religion. There will always be religious and moral questions about whether or not women should get abortions or birth control. This is a reality of where we live. However, as many republicans like to say when it comes to the COVID-19 vaccination “My body, my choice”. That saying has often been used in the past to refer to a woman's right to make her own choices about her body. If we reaffirm the fundamental right that women can decide what they want to do with their bodies we might get one step closer to solving that issue. This thought process can also address the need for MST reform and modernization within the Department of Defence.

The pandemic has allowed for a greater understanding and acceptance of the mental health challenges that people face on a day to day basis. With this insight, there is an opportunity for better understanding of some of the struggles that children in military families face. These mental health challenges can have lasting effects and be invisible for a long time. It is additionally important to think about when, where, and how the needs of the military community are being addressed, especially when it comes to the children.

By combining bills and creating a section in the NDAA that heavily focuses on these policy issues rather than having them spaced out and likely to be removed as they are now there is a chance that real modernization can occur. Additionally, it is also important to support bills that directly support this population rather than being sucked into party politics as many so often are.

There are over 1,000,000 DoD Active Duty military personnel, over 40,000 DHS's Coast Guard Active Duty members, over 1,000,000 DoD Ready Reserve and DHS Coast Guard Reserve, almost 200,000 members of the Retired Reserve, and a little over 6,000 members in the

Standby Reserve. These numbers do not include civilian personnel.³⁶ These are not insignificant numbers and a large population of people that are impacted by the actions of the military and the choices they take. There are 2,500,000 military spouses³⁷ and dependents that are also impacted. This is such a large issue because it doesn't only affect the over 200,000 women currently serving³⁸, but their children and families as well. These numbers not only highlight the severity of the issue, but bring to light just how intertwined all of these issues really are.

Moving forward, it is key to remember that just because there are people on the other side of the aisle that might disagree with our own beliefs, that does not mean that they are completely against our agenda. This is where it is incredibly important to listen to the concerns of all parties involved and have an active discussion on where policy agendas are going. By listening and addressing concerns we not only have the potential to gain support but learn about the issue from another perspective that we might not have thought of or knew about.

Ultimately, there are many routes that can be taken when it comes to solving this issue. However, by ensuring that essential measures are included in the NDAA and stay there, that would be the foot in the door that is need to start the process of making the military a safer place for women and supporting critical aspects of family functioning.

There are people who have served our country on both sides of the aisle and continue to do so. This policy issue affects everyone even if our problems look different. It is important to keep this in mind when moving forward on these issues. Because many people have served in the

³⁶ 2020 Demographics Profile

³⁷ 2020 Demographics Profile

³⁸ 2020 Demographics Profile

military, are women, dependents, or were victims of sexual assault it is expected that this issue draws many emotions out.

This country was founded on the notion that “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”.³⁹ Those words don’t always ring as true when one thinks about the experiences that women face for trying to serve their country. It can also be challenging to believe that children who grow up so knowledgeable of the realities will have the opportunity to pursue Happiness. Happiness and contentment can be found in the smallest and easiest of places, however, they need the opportunity to be found. That is what this country was founded on and that is what it will rely on.

³⁹ Rubenstein

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<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2021/04/09/decades-women-were-discharged-military-pregnancy-now-lawmaker-wants-restore-their-benefits.html>.

This article references Representative Julia Brownley's bill "*Justice for Women Veterans Act*" as well as some of her personal statements on the matter. "'The unfair practice of discharging women from the military because they became pregnant or became a mother was not only wrong but it perpetuated a harmful cycle of gender prejudice,'" Brownley said in the release. "My goal is to identify disparities in access to care and benefits for women veterans and, where necessary, introduce, advocate for, and pass legislation that fixes those gaps."

Post author Authors Fianna Sogomonyan, Authors, Sogomonyan, F., Cooper, J. L.,

Project Improving the Odds for Young Children; & Publication Type

Report. (n.d.). *Trauma Faced by Children of Military Families: What Every Policymaker Should Know*. NCCP. Retrieved from

<https://www.nccp.org/publication/trauma-faced-by-children-of-military-families/>.

This page provides in depth demographic information about children in military families. Demographic information is also broken down to where the family lives and if they have been directly impacted by war. This page also offers statistics on the impact that deployment and war had on a child's mental health.

Rubenstein, J. R. D., Beeman, R. R., Calabresi, S. G., & Siegel, R. P. & R. (n.d.). *The Declaration, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights*. The Declaration, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights | The National Constitution Center. Retrieved from

<https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/white-papers/the-declaration-the-cons>

[tution-and-the-bill-of-rights#:~:text=](#)

This page talks about the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

NBCUniversal News Group. (2019, September 25). *Study reveals lasting effects of sexual assault among female veterans*. NBCNews.com. Retrieved from

<https://www.nbcnews.com/health/womens-health/study-reveals-lasting-effects-sexual-assault-among-female-veterans-n1058371> .

This article talks about how many women are affected by military sexual trauma (MST) and just how wide reaching this issue is. This page also talks about some of the impacts that MST might have on a person.

Speier, Representative Jackie. 2021. *H.R. 2709- Access to Contraception for Service Members*. April 20.

“To amend title 10, United States Code, to ensure that members of the Armed Forces and their families have access to the contraception they need in order to promote the health and readiness of all members of the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.”

Speier, Representative Jackie. 2021. *H.R. 3122- Service Member Parental Leave Equity Act*. May 11.

“To amend title 10, United States Code, to expand parental leave for members of the Armed Forces, to reduce the service commitment required for participation in the career intermission program of a military department, and for other purposes.”

Speier, Representative Jackie. 2021. *H.R. 3121- Military Child Care Expansion Act of 2021*. May 11.

“To expand child care opportunities for members of the Armed Forces, and for other

purposes”

Support for Military Personnel & Families • Military OneSource. Military OneSource.

(2021, December 1). Retrieved from <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/>.

This page provides general access to various types of information that can support military service members and their families. “The Military Family Readiness System, Family wellness resources, Child care resources, Education resources, Youth and teen resources, and Military OneSource specialty consultations” are all resources that are available through this website.

Wilson, Representative Joe. 2021. *H.R. 625- the Military Child Educational Freedom Act*.

January 28.

“This bill modifies the requirements for tax-exempt Coverdell education savings accounts to permit members of the Armed Forces serving on extended active duty or their spouses to use the accounts for certain education expenses incurred in connection with a home school that provides elementary or secondary education. The home school must be treated under state law as a home school or a private school.”