



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 853

Resolution calling upon the United States Congress to take action ensuring that women in the Armed Services are given adequate access to women-specific health services, including gynecological, breast cancer, cervical cancer, preventative and mental health services.

By Council Members Dromm, Brewer, Cabrera, Dickens, Eugene, Fidler, Gentile, Gonzalez, James, Koppell, Koslowitz, Lander, Mendez, Recchia, Rose, Williams, Vacca, Arroyo, Chin, Nelson, Reyna, Palma, Lappin and Koo

Whereas, Women have served in the United States military since the Revolutionary War; and

Whereas, Since that time, the roles of women in the military have changed and their numbers have dramatically increased; and

Whereas, According to the *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2011*, there were 197,900 active duty women in the military as of September 30, 2008, which constitutes 14% of military personnel; and

Whereas, While all military personnel are eligible for healthcare through the Military Health System (MHS), women have gender-specific needs and some servicewomen and advocates have reported that these needs are not always being adequately met; and

Whereas, According to the Service Women Action Network (SWAN), over 65% of military pregnancies are unintended, thereby making reproductive health services imperative; and

Whereas, Reproductive healthcare should include adequate access to gynecological services, including contraception, emergency contraception and abortion; and

Whereas, Although women are barred from direct military combat, they are increasingly involved in combat situations and face the physical and emotional risk of combat duty confronted by their male counterparts; and

Whereas, Some advocates have claimed that women are often not adequately screened for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) with the same frequency as men who have served; and

Whereas, Military Sexual Trauma (MST) is one of the most traumatic issues that women in the military confront and is thought to affect up to one-third of all servicewomen; and

Whereas, MST can include rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment and can lead to PTSD; and

Whereas, Due to the culture of the military, women who have MST often do not disclose their condition and are fearful to seek services; and

Whereas, Although steps have been taken to address some of these issues, there continue to be concerns about the adequacy of care of women in the military; and

Whereas, On May 2, 2011, Congress Member Niki Tsongas introduced H.R. 1679, also known as the Women's Excellence of Care and Accessibility Review and Evaluation or "WE CARE Act" which would address some of these concerns; and

Whereas, The WE CARE Act would direct the Secretary of Defense to conduct a comprehensive review of the availability, efficacy and adequacy of health care services available for female members of the Armed Forces; and

Whereas, This review would include reproductive health care services including gynecological services, and breast and cervical cancer services; primary and preventive health care services for women; the need and availability of women-specific treatment for sexual harassment, sexual assault or sexual abuse; and the extent to which military medical treatment facilities are following the policies of the Department of Defense (DoD); and

Whereas, The WE CARE Act would also require an assessment of the need for women-specific health outreach, prevention, and treatment services for female members of the Armed Forces; the access and efficacy of existing women-specific mental health outreach, prevention and treatment services and programs, including substance abuse programs; the access to and need for military treatment facilities focusing on the women-specific health care needs of female members of the Armed Forces; and the need for further clinical research on

the women-specific health care needs of female members who served in a combat zone; and

Whereas, Women who serve in the United States Armed Forces deserve the best health care possible and it is our duty to provide it to them; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the United States Congress to take action ensuring that women in the Armed Services are given adequate access to women-specific health services, including gynecological, breast cancer, cervical cancer, preventative and mental health services.

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