

## ***Veteran Families Health Services Act***

*Senators Patty Murray, Tammy Duckworth, Cory Booker, and Chuck Schumer*

Veterans experience infertility at about two times that of the general population due to their service-connected injuries and disabilities. Specifically, about 15.8% of women and 13.8% of men who served in the Global War on Terror reported infertility upon returning from deployment. Veterans and servicemembers make so many sacrifices for this country, but forgoing the ability to have a family should not be one of them.

Right now, VA and DoD's fertility programs are severely limited and too often fail to meet the needs of veterans, servicemembers, and their families. Only individuals who are married to opposite-sex partners that can provide gametes for IVF are eligible for IVF services under VA or DoD health care—this excludes all unmarried veterans and servicemembers whose partners are infertile, the same sex, or unable to provide gametes. Additionally, VA and DoD put onerous burdens of proof that currently make it very difficult for many veterans to access IVF services even when they do meet the requirements. The *Veteran Families Health Services Act* aims to enhance fertility services in DoD and VA. This bill would:

- Allow servicemembers to cryopreserve their gametes before deployment to a combat zone or hazardous duty assignment and after an injury or illness.
- Permanently authorize fertility treatment and counseling, including assisted reproductive technology such as IVF, for veterans, servicemembers, and their spouses and allow for the use of donated gametes.
- Ensure that veterans' and servicemembers' spouses, partners, and gestational surrogates are appropriately included in eligibility rules.
- Provide support for servicemembers and veterans to navigate their options, find a provider that meets their needs, and ensure continuity of care after a permanent change of station or relocation.
- Expand options for veterans with infertility by allowing VA to provide adoption assistance.
- Require VA and DoD to facilitate research on the long-term reproductive health needs of veterans.

The bill is supported by RESOLVE and the American Society for Reproductive Medicine.