

November 14, 2024

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Reed and Rogers, and Ranking Members Wicker and Smith,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we urge you to protect the health, safety, and well-being of all our military service members and families by rejecting harmful riders targeting reproductive and gender-affirming care in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). These provisions threaten access to critical health care for military families, invite a culture of discrimination and harassment, and would exacerbate the readiness, retention, and recruitment crisis that the military is already facing.

We call on Congress to reject any bans or restrictions on health care access for military service members and dependents in the NDAA, including for gender-affirming care and reproductive health care. Current proposals in the House and Senate NDAA would risk the health of transgender members and dependents, and perpetuate baseless myths about gender-affirming care. The House NDAA also contains a broad provision attacking reproductive health care access - including abortion and fertility care - and the rights of military providers to provide such care. Everyone deserves to live safe and healthy lives without health care barriers - and when service members join the military, they are promised access to comprehensive health care for them and their families. We must uphold this promise by rejecting harmful bans and restrictions that have no place in the NDAA. Passing these riders would create a dangerous precedent in major legislation, codifying bans on health care in a bill that should help, not harm, service members and their families. We strongly urge you to reject them.

We further urge you to ensure that other discriminatory riders stay out of the final NDAA package, including those that attack LGBTQI+ service members and dependents, and threaten diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in the military. A more diverse, inclusive, and welcoming military benefits all who fill its ranks. We cannot regress to the days when service members were discriminated against or harassed for who they were or who they loved. A renewed culture of hate and stigma would force service members out of the military - impacting thousands - thereby threatening military readiness and undermining the tremendous investments made in service members' military training and experience.

We are deeply concerned about the politicization of major bills such as the NDAA and these attacks against service members, veterans, and their families. There should be no compromise when it comes to our fundamental rights. We urge you to reject these harmful riders in the final NDAA.

Sincerely,

Academy LGBTQ
Advocates for Youth
AIDS United
All* Above All
Alliance for TransYouth Rights
American Atheists
American Civil Liberties Union
American Humanist Association
American Society for Reproductive Medicine
American Veterans for Equal Rights
Americans United for Separation of Church and State
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Black Veterans Project
CA LGBTQ Health and Human Services Network
Center for Reproductive Rights
CenterLink: The Community of LGBTQ Centers
Council for Global Equality
Create the Pause
Eastern PA Trans Equity Project
Endangered Species Coalition
Equality California
EqualityMaine
Equitas Health
Family Equality
Fenway Health

FFRF Action Fund
FORGE, Inc.
Friends of the Earth
Gender Justice League
GenderNexus
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ+ Equality
GLSEN
Guttmacher Institute
Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America
Henderson Equality Center
Human Rights Campaign
Human Rights First
Ibis Reproductive Health
Impact Fund
Indivisible
Inside Out Youth Services
Keystone Progress Education Fund
Lambda Legal
Lexington Gay Services dba Lexington Pride Center
Los Angeles LGBT Center
Love me unlimited 4life
Lyon-Martin Community Health Services
Maine TransNet
Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition
Mazzoni Center
Minority Veterans of America
Modern Military Association of America
Montgomery Pride United/ Bayard Rustin Community Center
Movement Advancement Project
Muncie OUTreach LGBTQ+ Center
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Parent Leadership, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment (National PLACE)
National Council of Jewish Women
National Education Association
National Employment Law Project
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
National Health Law Program
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
National LGBTQ+ Bar Association

National LGBTQI+ Cancer Network
National Network to End Domestic Violence
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Law Center
NBJC
Oasis Legal Services
Out in National Security
OutCenter Southwest Michigan
OutNebraska
PFLAG National
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Point of Pride
Positive Women's Network-USA
Power to Decide
Pride Center of Terre Haute
PRISM Florida
Project On Government Oversight
Public Citizen
Public Justice Center
Queer Power Alliance
Reproductive Freedom for All (formerly NARAL Pro-Choice America)
RootsAction.org
San Diego Pride
SC Equality Trans Action
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Service Women's Action Network
SIECUS: Sex Ed for Social Change
Silver State Equality-Nevada
SPARTA Pride
Sussex Pride
Swords to Plowshares
T-time Transgender Support
Tahirih Justice Center
The AIDS Institute
The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI)
The Trevor Project
Trans Advocacy Pennsylvania
Trans Formations Project

TransFamily Support Services
Transgender Law Center
Transgender Veterans Support Group
TransInclusive Group
TransOhio
Transpositive PDX
Union for Reform Judaism
Virginia Council on LGBTQ+
Waves Ahead Corp
We Are Family
Whitman-Walker Institute
Women of Reform Judaism

CC:

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer
Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell
House Speaker Mike Johnson
House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries