

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 21, 2016

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Vice Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Lowey, Chairman Cochran and Vice Chairwoman Mikulski:

As conference of the Fiscal Year 2017 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act continues, we urge you to adopt a vital provision designed to ensure that veterans get the health care they deserve from the Senate bill.

Section 247 of the Fiscal Year 2017 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act appropriates \$88 million for fertility treatments, including assisted reproductive technology, over fiscal years 2017 and 2018. This provision addresses the critical issue of veterans' combat-related infertility. More than 1,500 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are suffering from infertility as a result of combat trauma, largely blast injuries. These veterans have sacrificed a great deal for our country—they should not have to sacrifice their dreams of starting or growing their families.

While the DoD is able to provide assisted reproductive technology, of which in vitro fertilization is the most popular treatment, to active duty servicemembers, the VA has been prohibited from doing so since 1992. This is despite the fact that the VA believes that offering IVF would “promote, preserve, and restore the health of veterans” and be “consistent with VA’s goal to restore the capabilities of veterans to the greatest extent possible^[1].”

The funding in the Senate bill was included as an amendment by Senator Murray and enjoyed broad bipartisan support. We urge you to adopt it in the conference legislation so that combat wounded veterans can access the treatments they need to become parents.

Sincerely,



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress

^[1] Department of Veterans Affairs Report to Congress on Blast Injury Treatment, April 20, 2016