Expanding Reproductive Health Care Coverage for Military Women

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Less Health Care Coverage for Servicewomen & Military Dependents

- Coverage for abortions is limited by law in in federal health insurance programs.

- Abortion may be funded, however, when life of the woman is endangered or pregnancy results from rape or incest. Examples:
  - Federal Employee Health Benefits
  - Medicaid
  - Medicare
  - Indian Health Services
  - District of Columbia

- But for military women and military dependents, coverage only if life endangered.
  - No rape/incest coverage

Two Military Abortion Restrictions in Current Law

(Section 1093, title 10, United States Code)

- Restriction on Use of Funds – Funds available to the Department of Defense may not be used to perform abortions except where the life of the mother would be endangered if the fetus were carried to term. (No rape/incest exception)

- Restrictions on Use of Facilities – No medical treatment facility or other facility of the Department of Defense may be used to perform an abortion except where the life of the mother would be endangered if the fetus were carried to term or in a case in which the pregnancy is the result of an act of rape or incest. (Rape/incest exception)

Result

- Military women/dependents are treated differently than other federal beneficiaries who survive rape and incest. They receive less health care coverage.
- Existing law negatively impacts military readiness; it undermines a fundamental principle that we take care of our troops.
- Existing law especially impacts junior enlisted who are most likely targets of rape and least likely able to afford care.
- Americans have great empathy for a woman facing a pregnancy caused by rape. Recent poll showed 68% of respondents oppose DoD's failure to cover abortions in the case of rape or incest.

Current Legislative Proposal

- Amendment to National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2013 by Senator Shaheen of New Hampshire
  - Would authorize use of Department of Defense funds to cover abortions in cases of rape or incest (as well as life of woman)

- Passed by bi-partisan vote of Senate Armed Services Committee (16-10; Chairman Levin and ranking Senator McCain in favor)
  - Waiting for a vote by full Senate
  - Similar provision not in House version of NDAA for FY 2013; Senate and House bills must be reconciled

- DoD supports adding rape/incest coverage

Concerted Action Needed to Secure Necessary Legislative Changes

Recommendation:

DoD should affirmatively, strongly and immediately press for passage of legislation, such as the provision offered by Senator Shaheen, to provide for DoD funding of abortion coverage in the case of rape or incest.