

## Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Public Health and Human Services to hold hearings on the challenges facing women veterans as they transition from military to civilian life and how they can access vital programs and services.

WHEREAS, Since the United States declared itself an independent nation, American women have proudly served their country throughout history, whether disguised as male soldiers during the American Revolution and Civil War, as nurses in World War I, or as combat helicopter pilots in Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, Women's involvement continued with the creation of the Army Nurse Corps at the turn of the 20th Century, work in the Army Signal Corps, and serving as Army nurses in World War I. The establishment of the Women's Army Corps during World War II and the integration of women into the regular Army in the 1970s advanced their roles and recognition further; and

WHEREAS, The early 1990s were a historic time for women in the military with over 40,000 women deploying in support of the Persian Gulf War, making women service members more visible in the eyes of the public. In addition, in 1992 the Defense Authorization Act repealed combat exclusion laws that prevented women from flying combat aircrafts; and

WHEREAS, In 2017 women reached new peaks, joining infantry and armor units for the first time and graduating from the Army's prestigious Ranger School as they began to fill the 138,000 combat positions opened to them in 2016; and

WHEREAS, Women now serve in every branch of the military, representing 15.5 percent of active duty military and 19.0 percent of National Guard and Reserve forces in 2015; and

WHEREAS, There are approximately 20 million veterans in the United States and 1.8 million, or 9.4 percent, are women veterans, who represent the fastest growing segment of the veteran community; and

WHEREAS, The services required by women veterans and the issues they face after their return to civilian life are different than those of their male counterparts; and

WHEREAS, Of the top ten conditions for women veterans in 2015, the top five (post-traumatic stress disorder, major depressive disorder, migraine, lumbosacral or cervical strain, and removal of uterus and ovaries) accounted for roughly 33 percent of all service-connected disabilities for women veterans; and

WHEREAS, About one in five women have told their VA healthcare provider that they experienced sexual trauma in the military, which is more likely to result in symptoms of PTSD than are most other types of trauma, including combat; and

WHEREAS, According to a study by the Women's Health Initiative, women veterans reported lower levels of self-perceived health, life satisfaction, social support, physical function, and quality of life than their non-

veteran counterparts; and

WHEREAS, The unique needs of women veterans are varied and complex, spanning the areas of health care, sexual assault, employment, finance, housing, and social issues, and as more women move into the ranks of veterans, it becomes important to investigate their post-military outcomes; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Committee on Public Health and Human Services is authorized to hold hearings on the challenges facing women veterans as they transition from military to civilian life and how they can access vital programs and services.