

116TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 2324

To direct the Secretary of Defense and the Secretaries of the military departments to encourage women members of the Armed Forces who separate or retire from the Armed Forces during fiscal year 2020 to participate in the Women’s Health Transition Training Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 30, 2019

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself and Mr. BOOZMAN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Armed Services

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## A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Defense and the Secretaries of the military departments to encourage women members of the Armed Forces who separate or retire from the Armed Forces during fiscal year 2020 to participate in the Women’s Health Transition Training Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Servicewomen’s Health  
5       Transition Training Act of 2019”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

2 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

3 (1) Women are now the fastest growing cohort  
4 of veterans and are expected to double in population  
5 by 2045.

6 (2) Women comprise approximately 2,000,000  
7 veterans in the United States and 10 percent of the  
8 total veteran population.

9 (3) Women veterans are nearly two times more  
10 likely to commit suicide than civilian women.

11 (4) On average, women do not connect with the  
12 Veterans Health Administration until 2.7 years after  
13 separating from military service.

14 (5) Female veterans have a higher rate of  
15 homelessness than their male counterparts.

16 (6) One in five female members of the Armed  
17 Forces report experiencing military sexual trauma.

18 (b) STATEMENT OF POLICY OBJECTIVES.—It is in  
19 the national interest of the United States to ensure women  
20 veterans receive a high quality of care by promoting pro-  
21 grams and initiatives that—

22 (1) educate women separating from active duty  
23 in the Armed Forces on the services available to  
24 them through the Department of Veterans Affairs;

1           (2) encourage women to enroll in the system of  
2           annual patient enrollment of the Department under  
3           section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code; and

4           (3) increase the number of women receiving  
5           health care from the Department.

6           (c) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-  
7           gress that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in piloting  
8           the Women’s Health Transition Assistance Program, has  
9           found that the pilot program has—

10           (1) educated hundreds of women in the process  
11           of separating or retiring from the Armed Forces on  
12           the care they can receive from the Department of  
13           Veterans Affairs, 99 percent of whom would rec-  
14           ommend the program to others;

15           (2) improved awareness among pilot program  
16           participants of services available from the Depart-  
17           ment by 56 percent; and

18           (3) increased the intent of pilot program par-  
19           ticipants—

20           (A) to enroll in the system of annual pa-  
21           tient enrollment of the Department under sec-  
22           tion 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code, by  
23           13.1 percent;

24           (B) to use health care services from the  
25           Department by 15.6 percent; and

1 (C) to use suicide prevention services from  
2 the Department, if needed, by 19.3 percent.

3 **SEC. 3. PARTICIPATION IN THE WOMEN'S HEALTH TRANSI-**  
4 **TION TRAINING PROGRAM OF THE DEPART-**  
5 **MENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense shall di-  
7 rect—

8 (1) each Secretary of a military department to  
9 encourage women members of the Armed Forces  
10 who separate or retire from the Armed Forces dur-  
11 ing fiscal year 2020 to participate in the Women's  
12 Health Transition Training Program of the Depart-  
13 ment of Veterans Affairs at locations selected by the  
14 Secretary concerned; and

15 (2) each commander of a military installation  
16 that has a center for the Transition Assistance Pro-  
17 gram under sections 1142 and 1144 of title 10,  
18 United States Code, to advertise the Women's  
19 Health Transition Training Program to women  
20 members described in paragraph (1).

21 (b) REPORT.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than February 1,  
23 2021, the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with  
24 the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, shall submit to  
25 Congress a report regarding participation in the

1 Women's Health Transition Training Program of  
2 the Department of Veterans Affairs as described in  
3 subsection (a).

4 (2) ELEMENTS.—The report required by para-  
5 graph (1) shall include the following:

6 (A) The number of participants in the pro-  
7 gram.

8 (B) The number of program sessions and  
9 the locations where the sessions were held.

10 (C) An assessment of available metrics in-  
11 cluding course satisfaction and improved aware-  
12 ness of health services furnished by the Sec-  
13 retary of Veterans Affairs.

14 (D) A description of barriers to expanding  
15 the program to reach more women members of  
16 the Armed Forces.

17 (E) A description of barriers to offering  
18 the program online to reach women members of  
19 the Armed Forces who cannot attend in person.

20 (F) Recommendations for legislation to im-  
21 prove or expand the program.

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