

as important, we make a promise to care for their families—their wives, their husbands, and their children.

Many of the young men and women who serve in the military enter at a very young age, often before they have children of their own. Like so many other Americans, they have big plans for their lives after their service. Many of them plan to buy a house, go back to school, and eventually have a family.

But in a time when our military conflicts involve roadside bombs, make-shift explosives, and life-threatening danger around every corner, many of our service men and women are coming home with injuries that leave them unable to start their own family.

In fact, military data shows that over the last decade, thousands of servicemembers have suffered injuries that make it nearly impossible to have children. We should be doing everything we can, with the best science and health services available, to help our veterans and their loved ones have children, despite their injuries.

But instead, outdated policies at the Pentagon and the VA are making it harder, not easier, for seriously injured veterans to have children. That is because when severely injured service men and women and veterans seek reproductive health services, such as in vitro fertilization, their military and VA health insurance simply doesn't cover this often very expensive procedure. As a result, the only option for these heroes and their partners to have children is to pay out of their own pocket, often tens of thousands of dollars, to try and conceive.

So today I am introducing The Women Veterans and Families Health Services Act of 2015.

It would basically do two things: First, it would expand the reproductive health services available for Active-Duty servicemembers and their families.

Second, it would finally end the ban on in vitro fertilization services at the VA. I have introduced similar legislation in the past, and, as I have done before, I am going to share the story of SSG Matt Keil and his wife Tracy.

Staff Sergeant Keil was shot in the neck while on patrol in Ramadi, Iraq, on February 24, 2007, just 6 weeks after he married the love of his life, Tracy. The bullet went through the right side of his neck, hit a major artery, went through his spinal cord, and exited through his left shoulder blade. He instantly became a quadriplegic. Doctors informed Tracy her husband would be on a ventilator for the rest of his life, and would never move his arms or legs.

Staff Sergeant Keil eventually defied the odds and found himself off the ventilator and beginning a very long journey of physical rehabilitation.

Around that same time, Tracy and her husband started exploring the possibilities of starting a family together. Having children was all they could talk about, once they adjusted to their "new normal."

With Staff Sergeant Keil's injuries preventing him from having children naturally, Tracy turned to the VA for assistance and began to explore her options for fertility treatments. Feeling defeated after being told the VA had no such programs in place for her situation, Tracy and Staff Sergeant Keil decided to pursue IVF through the private sector.

While they were anxious to begin this chapter of their lives, they were confronted with the reality that TRICARE did not cover any of the costs related to Tracy's treatments, because she did not have fertility issues beyond her husband's injury.

Left with no further options, the Keils decided this was important enough to them that they were willing to pay out of pocket to the tune of almost \$32,000 per round of treatment. Thankfully, on November 9, 2010, just after their first round of IVF, Staff Sergeant Keil and Tracy welcomed their twins Matthew and Faith into the world.

Tracy told me:

The day we had our children something changed in both of us. This is exactly what we had always wanted, our dreams had arrived.

The VA, Congress and the American People have said countless times that they want to do everything they can to support my husband or make him feel whole again and this is your chance.

Having a family is exactly what we needed to feel whole again. Please help us make these changes so that other families can share in this experience.

Tracy does not want to see other servicemembers and their families go through the struggle she and Matt did because of outdated policies that don't reflect modern medicine.

While the Keils' story may be unique, they are not alone. Thousands of servicemembers and veterans have returned from their service hoping to have children, only to find that, despite their sacrifices for our country, they are unable to obtain the kind of assistance they need. Some have spent tens of thousands of dollars in the private sector, like Tracy and her husband did, to get the advanced reproductive treatments they need to start a family. Others have, sadly, watched their marriages dissolve because of the stress of infertility, in combination with the stress of readjusting to a new life after a severe injury, driving their relationship to a breaking point.

Any servicemember who sustains this type of serious injury deserves so much more. They deserve our support to help them start a family, and our support to raise that family.

This bill is so important because access to childcare is one of the most significant barriers to care for women veterans and younger veterans. This bill makes permanent the highly successful pilot program in VA and expands it across the country. I am very hopeful today that both Republicans and Democrats can come together to support this bill.

Just a few years ago we were able to pass similar legislation through the Senate, but, unfortunately, it didn't pass the House in time to get the President's signature and become signed into law. This time has to be different, because this bill is about nothing more than giving veterans who have sacrificed so much the option to fulfill the dream of starting a family. It is a bill that shows when we tell our servicemembers deploying to a war zone that we have their back, we mean it. It is a bill that recognizes the men and women who are harmed in the service of this country have bright, full lives ahead of them.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 250. Mr. HATCH proposed an amendment to the bill S. 295, to amend section 2259 of title 18, United States Code, and for other purposes.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 250. Mr. HATCH proposed an amendment to the bill S. 295, to amend section 2259 of title 18, United States Code, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 4, beginning on line 22, strike "sexual conduct (as those terms are defined in section 2246)" and insert "sexual contact (as those terms are defined in section 2246) or sexually explicit conduct (as that term is defined in section 2256)".

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 11, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to hold a meeting during the session of the Senate on February 11, 2015, at 9:45 a.m., in room SR-253 of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled, "The Connected World: Examining the Internet of Things."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 11, 2015, at 9:30 a.m., in room SD-406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled, "Oversight Hearing: Examining EPA's proposed carbon dioxide emissions rules from