

The Honorable Carl Levin, Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
296 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith, Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2402 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

December 10, 2012

Dear Senator Levin and Representative Smith:

We, the undersigned religious and religiously-affiliated organizations, represent millions of people of faith. Although our religious perspectives are diverse, we are united by a common belief that our nation's laws should support the dignity, health, and well-being of all women. Therefore, we strongly urge you to support Section 711 (also known as the Shaheen Amendment) of the Senate-passed FY13 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

Under current law, most federal health insurance programs cover abortion care for survivors of rape and incest. Unbelievably, our nation's military women and their dependents are **denied** this coverage, meaning that a woman who has just experienced one of the most distressing events of her life must overcome additional obstacles that her civilian counterparts do not. This callous, unjust policy relegates our servicemembers and their families to second-class citizenship when it comes to accessing healthcare after surviving sexual violence. It is particularly egregious because of the disproportionately high rates of military sexual assault compared to the civilian population. Our faith values call us to offer compassion and support for women who experience such trauma — not judgment and not discrimination. We believe that the servicewomen and military families who survive sexual violence deserve the same coverage as civilian survivors of such trauma.

We strongly support Senator Jeanne Shaheen's (NH) language in the Senate-passed NDAA, which would provide servicewomen and military dependents with insurance coverage for abortion in cases of rape and incest. Congress should ensure that the Department of Defense provides servicewomen with the same access to care as the civilians they protect. **Please include the Shaheen language in the final version of the NDAA.**

Sincerely,

African American Ministers in Action

Anti-Defamation League

Catholics for Choice

Central Conference of American Rabbis

Disciples for Choice

Episcopal Women's Caucus

Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.

Jewish Women International

Methodist Federation for Social Action

Muslims for Progressive Values

National Council of Jewish Women

Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

Religious Institute

Union for Reform Judaism

Unitarian Universalist Association

Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation

United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries

Women's League for Conservative Judaism

Women of Reform Judaism