

# PRESS RELEASE



## **Congress to Include Reproductive Services Assistance in Veterans Bill** Legislative Move Comes After Years of Advocacy Efforts from Veterans Community

**WASHINGTON, DC.** (April 18, 2016) - In a major legislative victory for wounded veterans struggling with fertility and reproductive health, the Senate Appropriations Committee voted to support reproductive assistance for injured service members. Led by Senator Patty Murray (D-Washington), the amendment passed with bi-partisan support, and would provide coverage for in-vitro fertilization (IVF) and other reproductive assistance. The passage was applauded by Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP), whose mission is to honor and empower Wounded Warriors.

"We are grateful to the Senate Appropriations Committee for recognizing that our wounded veterans should have the opportunity to start a family. That outcome is now within reach for thousands of injured service members," said Jeremy Chwat, chief strategy officer at WWP. "Passage of such a law could literally make the dreams of some veteran families come true. We applaud Senator Murray's leadership and urge Congress to enact this provision into law. Wounded Warrior Project has worked hard in support of IVF for years, and we will continue to advocate on behalf of wounded veterans, pursuing legislative changes like this."

As shared by WWP Combat Stress Recovery Director Ryan Kules during the March 3, 2016 Joint Hearing of the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee (<http://1.usa.gov/1VmlGVe>), the injuries suffered by many of our men and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan – including traumatic brain injuries (TBI), spinal cord injuries, and genitourinary (genital) injuries – have had life-altering effects on the ability to start a family. While the Department of Veterans Affairs has provided remarkable care and assistance to help heal the wounds these warriors have suffered, more can – and should – be done.

"Unlike the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs does not pay for IVF," said Chwat. "Beyond the fairness of providing consistent coverage upon separation from active duty, extending the VA medical benefits package to include IVF emphasizes the importance of family as part of an injured service member's recovery."

Through its advocacy and Congressional engagement activities, WWP has effected major legislative action on behalf of wounded veterans, in two major bills that the nonprofit spear-headed: the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act, and Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance Traumatic Injury Protection (TSGLI). Between these two pieces of legislation, the financial impact of WWP advocacy efforts is now beyond \$2.6 billion.

WWP continues to advocate on behalf of wounded veterans, by asking Congress to close a loophole in TRICARE/Medicare coverage that costs some injured service members more than a thousand dollars each year, and more importantly, puts at risk these warriors' access to health insurance benefits for both them and their families.

To learn more about WWP's advocacy efforts, please visit:  
<https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/programs/policy-government-affairs.aspx>.

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## About Wounded Warrior Project

The mission of Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) is to honor and empower Wounded Warriors. WWP's purpose is to raise awareness and to enlist the public's aid for the needs of injured service members, to help injured servicemen and women aid and assist each other, and to provide unique, direct programs and services to meet their needs. WWP is a national, nonpartisan organization headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida. To get involved and learn more, visit

[woundedwarriorproject.org](http://woundedwarriorproject.org).

