

Advances for Women Veterans Move Forward

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The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is applauding two key developments for women veterans. On November 19, the [Senate passed bill S. 1963, The Caregiver and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2009](#) (98-0).

“This is major progress toward more fully acknowledging the vital military contributions of women during war and peace. We’re confident the provisions for women’s health care will make it to the President’s desk quickly,” said Eric A. Hilleman, Director, VFW National Legislative Service.

S. 1963 includes six VFW-supported bills. Key provisions include:

- Studies on access to care for female veterans
- Improvements in training and care for military sexual trauma
- Providing child care services for veterans seeking treatment at VA
- Expanding services to veterans in rural areas
- Providing caregiver support, counseling and a stipend for family members taking care of veterans
- Allowing catastrophically disabled veterans emergency care outside VA
- Enhanced programs aimed at reducing homelessness among veterans

S. 1963 was previously stalled by Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) due to costs.

In another major development, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is launching a comprehensive study of women veterans who served during the Vietnam War.

The research will explore the effects of their military service on their mental and physical health. The study is considered the most comprehensive examination of women Vietnam veterans to date.

The VA estimates there are approximately 1.8 million women veterans in the United States.

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Nearly 15% of service members on active duty are female, with numbers on the rise.

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