

June 29, 2023

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Speaker
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steve Scalise
Majority Leader
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Emmer
Majority Whip
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Elise Stefanik
Republican Conference Chair
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Gary Palmer
Republican Policy Committee Chair
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
House Rules Committee Chair
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Rogers
House Armed Services Committee Chair
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
House Appropriations Committee Chair
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressional Leaders,

On February 16, 2023 President Biden politicized the National Defense Authorization Act, when the Department of Defense began using taxpayer dollars to fund all travel expenses for service members and their families to receive elective abortions. We, the undersigned, believe this unjust, and illegal policy must be fully repealed through the NDAA in order for a “clean” bill to move forward.

Clear language defunding Biden’s abortion travel policy has passed the Appropriations Committee in the Department of Defense Appropriations bill, but the NDAA is the legislative vehicle to reassert Congress’ authority over policymaking and ensure that our nation’s laws and policies reflect the will of the American people. Now that the House Armed Services Committee has passed the FY24 NDAA it is imperative that this policy be fully repealed in any NDAA that passes on the House floor.

After the Supreme Court decision in *Dobbs*, President Biden declared his intent to further his pro-abortion agenda through every means possible. Four days after the decision, on June 28, 2022, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Gilbert Cisneros Jr. released a memo detailing the department’s existing authority on paying for abortions stating clearly that travel for non-covered abortions would be paid “at the Servicemember’s own expense.”

However, continued pressure from the Biden Administration’s Taskforce on Reproductive Healthcare Access led the Department of Defense to reconsider their stance to follow all applicable laws on performing and paying for abortions. An October 22, 2022 memo from Secretary Lloyd Austin outlined new policies that use taxpayer funds to pay for time off, lodging and travel for elective abortions and these policies were made official on February 16, 2023. This

is now the first opportunity the U.S. House of Representatives has had to reauthorize the Defense Department and its personnel policies since the abortion travel policy has been in effect.

The American people expect the military to focus on winning actual wars, not fighting culture wars. And the majority (60 percent) do not approve of using taxpayer money to fund abortions. Rather than focusing on confronting the serious challenges facing our country, President Biden and Secretary Austin have unnecessarily dragged the military into the middle of a divisive political issue and attempted to co-opt military resources in furtherance of an unrelated, partisan, ideological agenda. The House of Representatives now has an opportunity to remedy these egregious actions and pass a truly clean NDAA.

Signed,

Kevin Roberts
President
The Heritage Foundation

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Acting Executive Director
Heritage Action for America

Marjorie Dannenfelser
President
Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America

Jeanne F. Mancini
President
March for Life Education and Defense Fund

Carol Tobias
President
National Right to Life

Steven H. Aden
Chief Legal Officer & General Counsel
Americans United for Life

Kristan Hawkins
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Students for Life Action

Tony Perkins
President
Family Research Council

Craig DeRoche
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Family Policy Alliance

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Christina Francis, MD
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