The Honorable Roger F. Wicker
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Wicker:

Thank you for your letter to the Secretary of Defense regarding his October 20, 2022 memorandum, “Ensuring Access to Reproductive Health Care,” and the recent release of Department policies on Service member privacy related to pregnancy and access to reproductive health care. I am responding on the Secretary’s behalf as these matters fall under my purview.

On October 20, 2022, the Secretary of Defense signed a memorandum directing additional actions to ensure Service members and their families can access reproductive health care and Department of Defense health care providers are able to operate effectively, consistent with Federal law. On February 16, 2023, the Department released policies on command notification of pregnancy, administrative absence for non-covered reproductive health care, and travel allowances for non-covered reproductive health care. These policies reinforce the Secretary of Defense’s commitment to taking care of our people, protecting their health and well-being, and ensuring the force remains ready and resilient.

As of March 2023, Service members are afforded the option—similar to their civilian counterparts—of having up to 20 weeks before they are required to notify their commanders of pregnancy, except in certain circumstances in which earlier notification is necessary based upon individual circumstances of the Service member and mission requirements. This provides Service members the time and flexibility to make personal health care decisions. Service members and eligible dependents may also use an administrative absence and travel allowance to access assisted reproductive technology to help them in building a family. Approximately 130 military medical treatment facilities offer walk-in contraceptive counseling and services, including the full scope of non-surgical, same-day contraceptive methods, without a referral or appointment. Service members are also granted 12 weeks of non-chargeable, paid parental leave following the birth of a child, adoption of a minor child, or placement of a minor child for adoption or long-term foster care. Lastly, Service members and eligible dependents are given the time, space, and resources necessary to access lawfully available health care that may not be available within the local area of their duty station. However, Service members are still required to pay for non-covered reproductive health care, to include non-covered abortions and assisted reproductive technology.

Due to the nature of military service, Service members do not choose where they are stationed or assigned. The policies on administrative absence and travel allowances for non-covered reproductive health care ensure access to reproductive health care irrespective of a Service member’s duty station or assignment. To mitigate the impact of certain assignment locations,
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The efforts taken by the Department on reproductive health care will not only ensure Service members and their families are afforded the time and flexibility to make private health care decisions, but will also ensure Service members are able to access non-covered reproductive health care regardless of their duty station. These policies reflect and reinforce our commitment to taking care of our people and ensuring the entire force remains ready and resilient.

Thank you for your continued strong support for our Service members and their families. I am sending similar responses to the other signatories of your letter.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
The Honorable Deb Fischer  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Fischer:

Thank you for your letter to the Secretary of Defense regarding his October 20, 2022 memorandum, “Ensuring Access to Reproductive Health Care,” and the recent release of Department policies on Service member privacy related to pregnancy and access to reproductive health care. I am responding on the Secretary’s behalf as these matters fall under my purview.

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Sincerely,

[Signature]

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
The Honorable Tom Cotton  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cotton:

Thank you for your letter to the Secretary of Defense regarding his October 20, 2022 memorandum, “Ensuring Access to Reproductive Health Care,” and the recent release of Department policies on Service member privacy related to pregnancy and access to reproductive health care. I am responding on the Secretary’s behalf as these matters fall under my purview.

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Sincerely,

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
The Honorable M. Michael Rounds  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Rounds:

Thank you for your letter to the Secretary of Defense regarding his October 20, 2022 memorandum, “Ensuring Access to Reproductive Health Care,” and the recent release of Department policies on Service member privacy related to pregnancy and access to reproductive health care. I am responding on the Secretary’s behalf as these matters fall under my purview.

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Sincerely,

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.

2
The Honorable Joni K. Ernst  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Ernst:

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Sincerely,

[Signature]

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
The Honorable Thom Tillis
United States Senate
Washington, DC  20510

Dear Senator Tillis:

Thank you for your letter to the Secretary of Defense regarding his October 20, 2022 memorandum, “Ensuring Access to Reproductive Health Care,” and the recent release of Department policies on Service member privacy related to pregnancy and access to reproductive health care. I am responding on the Secretary’s behalf as these matters fall under my purview.

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Sincerely,

[Signature]

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
The Honorable Dan Sullivan  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Sullivan:

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Sincerely,

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
The Honorable Kevin Cramer  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510  

Dear Senator Cramer:

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Thank you for your continued strong support for our Service members and their families. I am sending similar responses to the other signatories of your letter.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
The Honorable Rick Scott  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Scott:

Thank you for your letter to the Secretary of Defense regarding his October 20, 2022 memorandum, “Ensuring Access to Reproductive Health Care,” and the recent release of Department policies on Service member privacy related to pregnancy and access to reproductive health care. I am responding on the Secretary’s behalf as these matters fall under my purview.

On October 20, 2022, the Secretary of Defense signed a memorandum directing additional actions to ensure Service members and their families can access reproductive health care and Department of Defense health care providers are able to operate effectively, consistent with Federal law. On February 16, 2023, the Department released policies on command notification of pregnancy, administrative absence for non-covered reproductive health care, and travel allowances for non-covered reproductive health care. These policies reinforce the Secretary of Defense’s commitment to taking care of our people, protecting their health and well-being, and ensuring the force remains ready and resilient.

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Sincerely,

[Signature]

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
The Honorable Marsha Blackburn  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Blackburn:

Thank you for your letter to the Secretary of Defense regarding his October 20, 2022 memorandum, “Ensuring Access to Reproductive Health Care,” and the recent release of Department policies on Service member privacy related to pregnancy and access to reproductive health care. I am responding on the Secretary’s behalf as these matters fall under my purview.

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Sincerely,

[Signature]

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
The Honorable Josh Hawley  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC  20510  

Dear Senator Hawley:

Thank you for your letter to the Secretary of Defense regarding his October 20, 2022 memorandum, “Ensuring Access to Reproductive Health Care,” and the recent release of Department policies on Service member privacy related to pregnancy and access to reproductive health care. I am responding on the Secretary’s behalf as these matters fall under my purview.

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Sincerely,

[Signature]

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
The Honorable Tommy Tuberville  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Tuberville:

Thank you for your letter to the Secretary of Defense regarding his October 20, 2022 memorandum, “Ensuring Access to Reproductive Health Care,” and the recent release of Department policies on Service member privacy related to pregnancy and access to reproductive health care. I am responding on the Secretary’s behalf as these matters fall under my purview.

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Sincerely,

[Signature]

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
The Honorable Markwayne Mullin  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Mullin:

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Sincerely,

[Signature]

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
The Honorable Ted Budd  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510  

Dear Senator Budd:  

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Sincerely,

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
The Honorable Eric Schmitt  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510  

Dear Senator Schmitt:

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