

Legislation for Black, Indigenous, & People of Color

The United States military was one of the first organizations that desegregated due to [Executive Order 9981](#), which President Harry Truman signed on July 26, 1948.

To make sure that minority veterans are receiving appropriate care, Congress passed [H.R. 3327](#) on September 12, 1991, which provided the designation of an Assistant Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs as the Chief Minority Affairs Officer of the Department. Then, a little more than a year later, Congress passed a law, [S. 2344](#), that directed the VA secretary to create a post-traumatic stress disorder program plan, which would include “the treatment needs of veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder who are women, such veterans who are ethnic minorities (including Native Americans, Native Hawaiians, Asian-Pacific Islanders, and Native Alaskans), and of such veterans who suffer from substance abuse problems in addition to post-traumatic stress disorder.” Then, a year after that, Congress passed [H.R. 3313 - Veterans Health Programs Extension Act of 1994](#), which directed the VA to include women veterans and minorities in their clinical research studies.

On October 7, 1994, Congress passed [H.R. 5244 – Veterans’ Benefits Improvements Act of 1994](#), establishing the Center for Minority Veterans, Center for Women Veterans, and an Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans. This advisory committee was extended five times up until 2018 ([H.R. 2297](#), [H.R. 5404](#), [H.R. 5985](#), [H.R. 2116](#), and [H.R. 3819](#)). It doesn’t appear to have been extended or reinstated since then.

Congress has also directed three studies or task forces to study minority veterans in various subjects. The first one, [H.R. 6416](#), deals with the effectiveness of veterans’ transition efforts, and it studies how minority groups are affected and challenged as they transition out of the military. This laid the groundwork for the later Solid Start acts to help support veterans as they re-enter the civilian world. The next one, [H.R. 2372](#), assesses “the effectiveness of all memoranda of understanding and memoranda of agreement entered into by the Under Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Health and a non-Department of Veterans Affairs entity.” This would be related to things like suicide prevention activities and outreach or coordination of mental health services. The assessment must break down the minority veterans that were served by these entities. The last study was a national baseline study to examine the prevalence of the experience of intimate partner violence among women veterans and minority groups.