

# Deportation of Women Veterans

The issue of deportation among female military service members and veterans is a complex and often overlooked problem. These women, who have served their adopted country, can find themselves in legal limbo, potentially facing deportation due to changes in immigration policies or minor infractions.

While exact numbers are hard to come by, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) estimates that there are thousands of deported veterans worldwide<sup>1</sup>. Although gender-specific data is not readily available, it's reasonable to assume that this issue also impacts female veterans.

## Legal Framework

Military service has historically offered a pathway to citizenship for non-citizen service members. However, the process is not automatic and requires proactive steps from the service member<sup>2</sup>. Changes in immigration policies, including stricter rules and increased deportations under the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, have made it easier for non-citizen veterans to be deported for criminal convictions, including minor offenses<sup>3</sup>.

## Implications

Deported veterans often face significant hardships in their countries of deportation, including language barriers, lack of access to healthcare, and separation from families. For female veterans, these challenges can be magnified. They may also face gender-specific issues such as limited access to reproductive healthcare or increased risk of gender-based violence<sup>4</sup>.

## Current Efforts

Several bills have been introduced in Congress to address this issue, including the Repatriate Our Patriots Act and the Veteran Deportation Prevention and Reform Act. These bills aim to prevent the deportation of veterans and establish a pathway for deported veterans to return to the U.S.<sup>5</sup>

In conclusion, the deportation of female military and veteran service members is an issue that warrants greater attention and action. It raises critical questions about immigration policy, military service, and the treatment of veterans.

## Footnotes

1. ACLU, "Discharged, Then Discarded: How U.S. Veterans are Banished by the Country They Swore to Protect" (2016) [↵](#)
2. National Immigration Forum, "Immigrants in the Military" (2018) [↵](#)
3. ACLU, "American Exile: Rapid Deportations That Bypass the Courtroom" (2014) [↵](#)
4. Human Rights Watch, "You Don't Have Rights Here: US Border Screening and Returns of Central Americans to Risk of Serious Harm" (2014) [↵](#)



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