



June 30, 2020

The Honorable Adam Smith  
Chair, House Armed Services Committee  
2264 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mac Thornberry  
Ranking Member, House Armed Services Committee  
2208 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: The Military Women's Coalition's Support for the PANORAMA Act of 2020

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Thornberry,

The Military Women's Coalition (MWC), representing over 1.6 million current and former servicemembers, veterans, their families and survivors, strongly recommends that you pass stand-alone legislation or an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to standardize collection, transparency, and reporting of demographic data in the military service academy congressional nominations process. We urge you to adopt these measures to improve academy admissions and congressional nominations processes to promote the readiness, robustness, and diversity of the United States Armed Forces.

Today's military operations take place in complex and rapidly changing environments. To optimize military effectiveness, our armed forces increasingly turn to men and women with distinct skills, experiences, and backgrounds. Since the academies are instrumental in training a diverse group of emerging generations of military leaders, this reform is a critical step toward improving the diversity of backgrounds including race, gender and ethnicity of our future officer corps.

Under current data collection and reporting protocols, it is impossible to obtain a full, accurate, and transparent picture of the role that the nominations and admissions processes play in achieving diversity at the military service academies. The recent congressional nominations data reported by the academies to Connecticut Veterans Legal Center (CVLC) indicates that the academies' admissions offices do not maintain nominations and admission data in uniform categories, nor do they properly match nominations data with individual congressional nominators. The data also do not provide a big-picture indication of the rates at which women, members of ethnic and racial minority groups apply for and receive Congressional nominations.

The Connecticut Veterans Legal Center's recent report on gender diversity in congressional nominations, [\*Gatekeepers to Opportunity\*](#), highlights alarming inconsistency and lack of transparency in the procedures used by many members of Congress in their nominations processes. The report highlights disparities found in the rates at which members of Congress nominate women to these training grounds for our nation's future military leaders. Myriad congressional nomination processes coupled with each academy's differing policies suggest that no one is looking at the collective nomination and selection statistics for women and racial and ethnic minorities across the three Department of Defense military academies. An annual big-

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picture review of these statistics could improve operational readiness by providing greater diversity where our military most lacks it today—at the most senior leadership levels.

The MWC, as represented by the organizations listed below, appreciates your leadership and your commitment to America's military and veterans. Please support this legislation and ensure it is incorporated into the NDAA. We look forward to working with you to move this bill forward.

Sincerely,

The Military Women's Coalition

Combat Female Veterans Families United

GA Military Women -

Lady Veterans Connect - *Shyles Albert - Executive Director*

Lambda Beta Alpha Military Sorority

Melwood Veteran Services

Northeast Florida Women Veterans

Protect Our Defenders

Pink Berets

Red Feather Ranch

ReInVentU

San Diego Women Veterans Network

Service Women's Action Network

Service: Women Who Serve

Veteran Women Enterprise Center

WINC: For All Women Veterans

Women in Military Service For America Women

Women Veterans of West Texas

Women Veterans Alliance

The MWC is a national group of formal and informal organizations who work collaboratively to serve and support US active duty, Guard, reserve, Veteran and retired service women by uniting and elevating their voices to influence policy and improve their well-being. Collectively, the MWC represents over 1.6 million members and supporters. Our vision is that someday military women are fully integrated, equally respected and equally supported members of the military and veteran community and their contributions are recognized as essential to national defense.

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