

Act. This bill helps finish the border wall, stops the Biden administration's open-border policies, and increases Border Patrol staffing.

This legislation awaits consideration in a Democratic-controlled Senate. It cannot wait any longer.

It is time for the Senate to take action. We cannot allow the Biden administration to dismantle the border wall. We cannot allow Secretary Mayorkas to circumvent or dismantle the successful remain in Mexico policy. We cannot continue to allow illegal immigrants to stream across our border illegally without regard for our national security.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues in the Senate to come together and support a commonsense plan like H.R. 2 to stem the humanitarian crisis on our southern border.

STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH UAW

(Ms. STANSBURY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because labor is in the House, the people's House, as we stand with workers all across America who are on strike, especially our United Auto Workers, who are on the front lines right now.

As a daughter of labor, this is a powerful moment in history. Across the Nation, across sectors, American workers are tired of giving their lives for their jobs every single day and getting less in return. They are standing up, organizing, and demanding better pay, better conditions, and better benefits.

This movement is about people, about writers, actors, postal workers, and autoworkers who are paving the path for future generations and receiving just compensation.

This is the moment. I am proud to stand in solidarity with our United Auto Workers and every worker across America who is collectively bargaining for the pay, benefits, and conditions that they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my friends to stay strong and keep up the fight.

ELECTING MEMBERS TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. AGUILAR. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Democratic Caucus, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 704

Resolved, That the following named Member be, and is hereby, elected to the following standing committee of the House of Representatives:

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY: Ms. Tlaib.

Mr. AGUILAR (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. NEWHOUSE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 2670, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to instruct.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Ms. Houlihan of Pennsylvania moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 2670 be instructed to disagree to section 716 of the House bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XXII, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Ms. HOULAHAN) and the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on this motion to instruct.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today because this House has a choice. We can either stand up for the rights of servicemembers and military families or we can allow the Republican-led House, and specifically the extreme faction of the Republican Conference, to continue their assault on reproductive freedoms.

For my Democratic colleagues and I, this choice is clear. We will fight. We will fight for the freedom of servicewomen and for their families, and I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to please do the same.

Many of our servicemembers joined the Armed Forces prior to the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* last June, and they did so with the understanding that they and their families would be treated with dignity and would receive comprehensive and high-quality healthcare services, regardless of where they were stationed—and, yes, that also includes access to abortion care.

Since *Roe* was overturned, servicemembers and their families have had access to travel and to leave if they need to seek reproductive healthcare, but unfortunately, that freedom is now being threatened today.

Mr. Speaker, today, for the very first time since 1973, 14 States have passed outright abortion bans. Seven more

have passed partial bans, and six more have tried but have been stopped by the courts.

Nearly 120,000 servicemembers are currently stationed in Texas. This is a State that has implemented a draconian anti-choice law and now has among the worst maternal health outcomes for women in the entire Nation. Our servicewomen deserve better.

This issue has been politicized, and it has been distorted. Outright lies have been spread by elected officials and by anti-abortion activists alike.

I will set the record straight. Here are the facts: Women in States with abortion bans are nearly three times more likely to die during pregnancy, during childbirth, or soon after giving birth. Let that sink in. We are stationing our women in uniform and their families in States where they are three times more likely to die during pregnancy.

No servicemember should have to accept a reality where they could literally die as a result of the anti-choice State law where they are stationed.

These are the conditions that our servicewomen and their military families have to consider when they decide to serve. Nearly half of servicemembers no longer have access to abortion care, and that is not counting even the members of their families, as well.

Our servicemembers signed up to serve our country with the understanding that one day they may have to make the ultimate sacrifice, the sacrifice of their life.

Let me remind the Chamber and those who are watching that we have an all-volunteer force. Again, I will repeat: We have an all-volunteer force.

As we look to recruit and retain the best fighters and the greatest minds that this Nation has to offer, we really cannot restrict the very freedoms that we ask women and men in uniform to potentially die for.

It is also important, as we talk, to go beyond the facts and figures and to share the personal and human impact of these anti-abortion laws and the choices we are facing here this week in this body.

In Texas, the second-largest State for Active-Duty servicemembers in our country, Amanda Zurawski was 18 weeks pregnant when her water broke, putting her at a high risk for developing a life-threatening infection. Doctors told Amanda that her life was in danger and that the fetus was going to die, but doctors could not provide the medical care that she needed because their hands were tied by Texas law.

Amanda eventually did develop sepsis and did eventually nearly die. Heartbreakingly, her ability to be and get pregnant in the future might be damaged, as well.

Amanda survived, and she survived to share this story about her harrowing experience to hopefully prevent others from having this experience, as well.

This story and the data that we have talked about today is why I am working with my colleagues, led by my dear

friend and fellow veteran, Congresswoman MIKIE SHERRILL, to try to codify this basic travel policy.

This body decided that women cannot be trusted to make their own reproductive healthcare choices, and instead, the majority in this House has decided to make it harder for servicewomen and their families to access care; to make it harder for them to make their own healthcare choices; to make it harder for servicewomen and military families to decide on their own if, when, and how to start their own families.

Also, a single United States Senator is holding up more than 300 military promotions and counting, hollowing out the military leadership and hurting our military readiness in the process. He is doing this all because he is that adamant that women in uniform cannot be trusted.

As a veteran myself, let me say out loud and clear that his actions are a disgrace, and Americans agree.

Again, more data: 70 percent of our constituents believe that women should have access to abortion care.

Mr. Speaker, the grave concerns I have outlined don't even begin to scratch the surface of all the harmful amendments that are also tacked on to this bill. Quite frankly, it is an embarrassment to this institution that our governance is just so fractured, so unable to agree on something so simple as letting a woman in uniform make the best care decisions for her family, her career, and herself.

Sadly, this is indicative of where we are today. I grew up in a military family, and I myself served. My parents didn't always agree on politics, but they shared a common love for the promises that this Nation offered my father, a refugee and Holocaust survivor who became a Navy aviator.

I have colleagues on the other side of this aisle with whom I work and respect, which is why I am deeply saddened to see a bipartisan bill that has endured for 60 years fall victim to this kind of partisan politics because the bipartisan bill that we passed originally out of committee by 58-1 is literally no longer recognizable.

Today, Mr. Speaker, is about choice, choice in more ways than one. We can either let this far-right minority continue to hold our national security hostage to their radical agenda, or we can refuse to allow them to play politics with our national security and with the health and well-being of our servicemembers.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this motion to instruct. This motion seeks to strip language in the House bill that prohibits the Department of Defense from spending taxpayer money to facilitate abortion procedures.

DOD's abortion travel policy is a flagrant violation of Congress' intent and our Nation's moral principles.

This is all part of the Biden administration's politicization of the military. For years, Biden's political appointees have been pushing questionable policies on our troops just to satisfy their ideological agenda. They understand that using military orders is the most efficient way to usher in the rapid social change that they seek.

The military should not be used as a petri dish for social experimentation. This is not the right thing to do. Our troops should not be used as the vanguard for the left's social agenda.

The civilian leadership at DOD should be focused on building the world's most lethal fighting force. Instead, they are doing somersaults to try to satisfy the far-left's political agenda.

This misguided abortion travel policy is just another example. It is a radical overreaction to a problem that doesn't exist.

Secretary Austin said that the policy was necessary to avoid significant implications for the readiness of the force, but in the 6 months since this began, there have been less than a handful of people who have exercised this policy.

Rather than helping readiness, radical policies like this one are undermining readiness. They are driving away potential recruits, and they are undermining morale and retention. It needs to end.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to oppose this motion, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1230

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Just before I introduce our next person, I want to emphasize that this is not a new policy. The DOD is not simply creating a new policy out of thin air. The DOD is, in fact, using precedent from the nonavailability of care and simply allowing women with reproductive health service needs to be able to have effective travel and reimbursement for said travel. Again, this is not a new policy, and it simply updates a policy that allows for travel reimbursement to ensure that we have equal access to healthcare.

Thankfully, we have a President in Joe Biden who is responsive to the needs of our military servicemembers and who supports this effort.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM).

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania for the time.

Hopefully, at some point on this floor, we will be able to debate the Defense appropriations bill. That bill and this bill that we have the motion on, the NDAA, have extreme social policy riders that make bipartisan cooperation just impossible.

The restricting rider that we are focusing on today is in both bills, and it stops servicemembers, civilians, and dependents from seeking basic reproductive healthcare. As the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania pointed out, when certain care is not available where a person is stationed, they have the flexibility of going to seek out that healthcare. The DOD's current policy is totally under Federal law and is totally legal.

Another misnomer that I hear quite often sometimes is it is undermining the Hyde amendment. Well, it doesn't do that either. The Hyde amendment allows for abortion services in certain circumstances. This would be a ban if a woman was stationed at a military post where we don't even offer obstetrics and gynecology, where she would have to seek care in another State, and many of these States have limited and put so many restrictions in place that the doctors are fearful of performing even procedures after miscarriage or the procedures that were pointed out with the woman in Texas. They have to go someplace else to receive the service, even services that are provided under the Hyde amendment.

Make no mistake, I don't support the Hyde amendment, but that is the least we should be able to do.

As has been pointed out, nearly 20 percent of the people who serve in our military are women, 80,000 of them are in States that restrict abortions, and our troops don't get to choose where they are stationed.

We need to make sure that our servicewomen are not treated as second-class citizens and that they have full access to their reproductive rights. In the past and in the future, women have faced barriers to reach their full potential. Let's not put up another barrier.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. JACKSON), an outstanding member of the Armed Services Committee.

Mr. JACKSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ROGERS for his outstanding leadership in crafting the strongest defense bill I have seen during my time in Congress.

Year after year, the chairman assures us that we are going to have a strong NDAA that we can be proud of back home, and this year is no different.

In July, this body passed the NDAA on a bipartisan basis to provide our warfighters with the resources and the authorities they need to provide for the defense of our Nation.

As a former Navy rear admiral, I know the vital role this legislation plays in our national security. Not only does this NDAA ensure that we have the weapons systems and equipment that our servicemembers need, it makes needed course corrections to restore the military's focus on fighting and winning wars.

This bill ensures that our military is laser focused on confronting the most

pressing national security threats that our Nation faces.

However, now, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have chosen to come to the floor and are seeking to inject politics back into our military by overturning the Jackson-Roy amendment that was adopted on a bipartisan basis to end the Department of Defense's illegal and immoral abortion policy.

After the Supreme Court's historic decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the Biden administration made their intention clear that they would work to sidestep the law however possible.

The Biden administration has pulled every lever within the Federal Government and encouraged Federal agencies to create rules and adopt policies that not only expand abortion access but also leave American taxpayers on the hook to subsidize abortion services.

Not even the Department of Defense was spared from the Biden administration's efforts. In October of last year, the Secretary of Defense released a memo titled: "Ensuring Access to Reproductive Health Care."

This memo outlined the steps to be taken by the Department to use taxpayer dollars to provide servicemembers and their dependents access to abortions and for providers to travel to different States to obtain the licensing required to perform such procedures.

In February of this year, the DOD enacted the policies outlined in the memo and became a completely unjustified and inappropriate participant in the war on life.

According to its illegal policy, the DOD can now reimburse travel expenses for servicemembers and their dependents who travel to obtain an abortion in another State and can also reimburse any associated fees for healthcare professionals seeking to be licensed in other States for the purpose of performing abortions, all, once again, on the taxpayers' dime.

Last year, immediately after the DOD started this unconstitutional process, Congressman ROY and I got to work to address this issue and ensure that we developed a bill to right this wrong.

I am so proud to stand on the House floor today and say that our provision mandating the DOD cease this insanity was successfully included in the House-passed version of the bill.

At the same time, Senator TUBERVILLE has bravely and steadfastly held the line in the Senate by placing a hold on all DOD senior leader nominations until the DOD complies with Federal law and ceases its abortion policies.

The DOD has complained that these holds harm national security, but the DOD has the ability to stop this immediately. All they have to do is rescind this illegal policy.

It has become clear to me that the Biden administration has purposely prioritized an illegal and highly political abortion policy over confirming

general and flag officers in our military.

This Biden-endorsed policy has nothing to do with strengthening our national security. Instead, this is just the latest example of the Biden administration pushing its radical and extreme pro-abortion agenda, ironically in the very agency responsible for defending American lives.

Regardless of your political or moral stance on abortion, this policy is in direct violation of Federal law, specifically section 1093 of title 10, U.S. Code, which restricts funds made available to the DOD from being used to perform abortions or for DOD facilities to be used for abortions.

No doubt my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will insist that taxpayer dollars are not directly funding these abortions, thereby rendering their policy legally sound. This is absolutely misleading, and they are lying to the American people.

While funds may not be going directly to the performance of the procedure, it has always been true that a restriction on funding for abortion is a restriction on funding for any cost used to promote or facilitate the abortion.

Funding travel and/or other costs for an abortion is, in fact, funding the abortion. There is no other reason for these travel expenses except to get an abortion. Therefore, providing financial support for the travel expenses relating to an abortion is a clear violation of laws that are already on the books.

The NDAA is meant to provide aid, support, and direction to the men and women charged with defending the security of this Nation. When necessary, it is also a mechanism through which we can bring the Department into compliance as needed.

Inclusion of the House's prohibition on the DOD's abortion policy in this year's NDAA is vital to bringing the Department into statutory compliance in accordance with our oversight function and refocusing the Department on its core mission of fighting and winning wars.

It stops here and it stops now. On this issue, I will never relent.

The days of the radical left ignoring the law and driving their social agenda in the military are done. I will absolutely not waver in my defense of the unborn or in my support of the rule of law.

I will do everything I can to ensure our military servicemembers can focus on their jobs and their families instead of being used to score political points for the Biden administration.

I appreciate the chairman's strong leadership in crafting this year's bill, and I look forward to the conference process where we will do everything in our power to maintain this vital provision.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Here are the facts: Not a single dollar is going toward paying for an abortion

under the current DOD travel policy, which only provides for leave and travel reimbursements for servicewomen who are forced to travel for their healthcare due to restrictive laws of the State that they are stationed in, in line with a very longstanding DOD policy that has always provided for travel and leave where specialized healthcare is not provided or allowed for.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. SLOTKIN).

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call out the amendments that have been forced into the Pentagon budget over the past month-and-a-half.

When this Pentagon budget was voted on in our committee, it passed 58-1. I voted for it, as did many of my peers on this side of the aisle and the other side of the aisle.

When it left our committee, it became a wish list of the rightwing culture war agenda. If you take a 40,000-foot view of what is going on here, it becomes very clear. The other side of the aisle is not going to stop until there is a Federal ban on all abortions, in every State, in every circumstance. Our last speaker made it clear.

A bill that is typically bipartisan has now become a prisoner of this debate. Let's review the bidding.

We have seen the other side of the aisle put in unnecessary abortion restrictions in minor appropriations, in veterans' bills targeting female veterans. A single Senator is holding up 300 critical military nominations because servicemembers want to get leave to get the care that they need, and the NDAA in its current form is targeting servicewomen specifically.

Make no mistake, the United States should hear that in every place, in every possible window. The people on the other side of the aisle are going to continue their 50-year pledge to get rid of all abortions everywhere. They are open about that. While those of them who are in competitive elections may try to mealy-mouth what they have done for the past 20 years, we need to hear what they are telling us.

The other side of the aisle is taking national security issues hostage for their unrelenting fight on this issue so that no woman can have a right to an abortion if she has been raped, if she is the victim of incest, or for a simple miscarriage, which one out of three women in America have had.

I know the other side of the aisle is not listening on this issue. The American people need to hear it loud and clear. They want a Federal ban on abortion.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JOHNSON), a great new member of the Armed Services Committee and a longtime champion of the unborn in America.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ROGERS and Representative JACKSON for their important work on this really critical issue.

Mr. Speaker, historically, Americans have transitionally held the most positive view of the U.S. military among all of our institutions, but something changed last year. Right now, less than half of Americans now have a great deal of confidence and trust in the military.

You want to know why? The reason stated is because the military leadership has become overly politicized. They are addressing issues that don't have anything to do with our national defense.

The best example of that probably is Secretary Austin's policy of reimbursing travel expenses for servicemembers seeking an abortion.

The law is clear, as the chairman has stated. Title 10, section 1093, explicitly prohibits funds available to the DOD from being used to perform abortions.

The statute was drafted, passed, and signed into law by the people's duly elected representatives. This politicized Department of Defense has decided to create a workaround.

Thankfully, the House-passed NDAA will end this lawlessness. We have to stand for that. The House has spoken on the issue, and the House's position is very clear.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to defeat this motion to instruct.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

We don't get to choose what our facts are. The chilling effect that is happening right now on recruiting is caused by a variety of things, but the number one reason, the number one contributing factor to a servicemember's decision to enlist or reenlist, is the support of their spouse.

If we are showing the entire country that we don't trust women and families to be in control of their own healthcare decisions, why would they encourage anyone in their family to reenlist or to enlist in the service at all.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. CROW).

Mr. CROW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge the conferees to strike this truly abhorrent provision from the National Defense Authorization Act.

As several of my colleagues have pointed out, when this bill went out of committee, out of the Armed Services Committee, it passed with a very strong bipartisan 58-1 vote. Then extremists within the Republican Party got ahold of it and made floor amendments and put in poison pills, including this one, in the bill.

A couple of facts: Number one, no taxpayer money is going to provide abortions for servicemembers. The longstanding policy of the Department of Defense is we allow servicemembers to travel for necessary medical procedures and care when they can't get that care on a base or locally. That is longstanding policy. That is what we are talking about here today.

You have also heard a bunch of my colleagues get up today and say this has nothing to do with national de-

fense, that this is superfluous; nothing to do with the national defense of our country. Really?

We can spend money and buy all the best tanks and aircraft carriers and missiles that money can buy, but what actually makes us strong? It is our people. Our people are behind all of that. What undergirds people is the trust within a unit.

I served three combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. I can tell you, if you don't trust the person you are going to war with, it is all meaningless.

Are we really going to set up a system where our women servicemembers are second-class citizens within our units and undermine the very trust and integrity of those units? No, we should not and will not. I will stand against that.

Number two, we are suffering historic recruiting shortages in our military. Are we really going to send a message to our young women who want to stand up and serve our country and maybe give their lives, that they can't access the same care as their male counterparts?

□ 1245

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Ohio). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. CROW. Is that the message we want to send? No. You can't say you are for our national security and also support this measure. More than anything else, this is a moral argument.

I don't want to see yellow ribbons tied around trees, I don't want to see people thank people for their service, I don't want to see 10 percent discounts on coffee or meals if they are willing to support a policy that undermines the morality of this country and the ability of our young men and women to get the care they need and for our young servicewomen, in particular, to be treated equally.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I have one correction to make, that this is a new policy. This was not existing policy. It was announced on October 20 against the advice of the congressional leadership and finalized on February 16. They didn't just take existing policy and continue it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SELF), a great new freshman Member.

Mr. SELF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, and I agree with my colleagues across the aisle: You cannot choose your own facts, and this is a moral discussion.

Abortion is not reproductive health. Abortion takes a life. There are two people involved in this issue, and one of them dies. This is not healthcare. This is not a political issue. It is a moral issue that our Nation needs to grapple with.

This motion must not pass.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from

California (Ms. PELOSI), former Speaker of the House.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding and for her leadership on this issue.

I commend the chair and ranking member of the Armed Services Committee for the legislation that came out of their committee 58-1, the bipartisanism to protect and defend, which is the oath of office that all of us take to serve in government; and also, though, to acknowledge that, on the floor of the House, these poisonous resolutions came forward and were added to the bill. I rise to move to instruct House conferees to honor our men and women in uniform by protecting their fundamental health freedom.

I was listening with interest and prayerfully, frankly, to the previous speaker, who just said that terminating a pregnancy is not a health issue. Well, for some people, it might be.

Do you believe in the Hyde amendment? I am not a fan of the Hyde amendment, but that is the law of the land. Under the Hyde amendment, if there is rape, incest, or the life of the mother is at risk, then that changes the dynamic in terms of public policy.

Now, suppose a family member has a situation where the life of the mother is at risk or a child of a servicemember is the victim of violence and rape in the community. Would you want that person to have their health needs met? If they are in a State that says absolutely not, then they would have to travel elsewhere to have their health needs met, in keeping with the Hyde amendment.

If you believe in the Hyde amendment, which I don't subscribe to, but many of you do, how can you deprive the life of a mother—whether it is a servicewoman herself or the spouse of a serviceperson, or child of a servicemember—the ability to seek the healthcare that they need?

The NDAA has long been bipartisan. This year, House Republicans are now engaging in a version that would restrict servicemembers from receiving full reproductive rights.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from California.

Ms. PELOSI. This is disrespectful. Shame on those who play political games with the courageous people who would give their lives to save ours.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I share the sentiment of the most recent speaker. I think it is shameful that the DOD has been playing games with the troops in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. MILLER).

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman JACKSON for

working tirelessly to stop Joe Biden from using our military to fund abortions and his woke agenda. Throughout this year, we fought to incorporate an amendment into the Defense bill to protect the religious liberty of our servicemembers and prevent the Biden Pentagon from funding abortions.

The American people do not want the military paying for abortions. Biden's radical leftwing transformation of our military has created a recruitment and retention crisis which puts our military readiness in crisis.

I thank my colleagues in the House who have fought to keep our military from funding abortions. No taxpayer funds should ever be used to fund abortions, and I will continue to advocate for innocent life.

As the saying goes: "America is great because America is good." Abortion is evil, and we can never become advocates for killing innocent babies in the womb.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, just a reminder that President Biden knows personally what it means to support those in uniform and to keep the administration's promise to make sure that our servicemen and -women are protected as they serve us all.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH), the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, just a couple quick points.

First of all, there is no legality issue here. This policy is clearly and unequivocally legal. As the quotes from the Hyde amendment said earlier, the Hyde amendment says that the government can't pay for an abortion or use their services for abortion.

The travel policy does not do either one of those things, so there is nothing illegal and nothing unconstitutional. This is a policy choice, and we have heard some very passionate arguments on both sides about what that policy choice should be.

Number one, let's put aside this ridiculous notion that this is illegal or unconstitutional. No. This is a perfectly legal policy that, on a policy ground, you disagree with.

Number two, in response to Chairman ROGERS' comment about this being a new policy, it is not really a new policy in the following sense: It has always been the policy of the Department of Defense that if you cannot get the healthcare that you need where you are at, they will pay to take you to where you can.

Now, prior to the Dobbs decision, that was not an issue when it came to reproductive services. The Dobbs decision changed that. The Biden administration didn't support the Dobbs decision and didn't make that happen.

Once that happened, servicemembers in many, many States were no longer able to get the reproductive healthcare that they needed or wanted where they were, so, therefore, the travel policy that has been a long-time existing pol-

icy then applied. It applied to servicemembers seeking reproductive healthcare that couldn't get it in the State where they were.

This is not a change in policy, and it is not illegal. It is a policy choice. As a number of speakers have mentioned, it is an important policy choice on the very recruitment issue. It will be harder to recruit women if they are not protected.

I think the former Speaker made an outstanding argument for why it is really important. Even if you don't believe in abortion, you have a miscarriage, you need these services that you cannot get, this is crucial to recruitment.

The last point on this is we keep hearing the military is not popular anymore because of Biden's woke policies, which is ridiculous. To the extent that the military has gone down in credibility, it is because so many people are running around trashing our military saying they are excessively woke.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Washington.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Our military is the best in the world. It is the best in the world today with those policies. Continuously undercutting and trashing our military as being weak and woke is hurting recruitment. I will grant you that. It is completely wrong, as are Senator TUBERVILLE's efforts to gut the military's ability to do its job because he disagrees with the policy.

We had a vote on it. President Biden got elected. He made his decision. Change the policy. Don't trash the military.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), a long-time champion of the unborn in America.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the motion to instruct.

Let's be absolutely clear. Current Federal DOD law already permits taxpayer funding of abortion in cases of rape, incest, and to save the life of the mother, but the Biden DOD travel policy forces taxpayers to pay the transportation costs for military members and dependents to travel to procure an abortion for any reason whatsoever right up until the moment of birth.

Some States, like my State of New Jersey—and there are many others like it, like New York and California—have enacted extremist laws that legally sanction the killing of a baby for any reason whatsoever right up until the moment of birth. The Biden policy has no limits on gestational age, so it facilitates aborting babies through all 9 months.

There is nothing humane, Mr. Speaker, or benign about abortion. Abortion is not healthcare unless one construes the precious life of an unborn child

analogous to a tumor to be excised or a disease to be vanquished.

Dr. RONNY JACKSON's House-passed amendment to the NDAA overturns the DOD abortion travel policy.

Regrettably, the pro-abortion culture is truly a culture of denial. It continues to deny, devalue, and disrespect unborn children, both boys and girls.

We must recognize the breathtaking miracle of the newly created life of an unborn child and that women deserve better than abortion. We need to care for both. We need to love them both.

I do believe, Mr. Speaker, that future generations will someday look back on us and wonder how and why a society that bragged about its commitment to human rights could have legally sanctioned and aggressively promoted child beheadings, because they do behead the child during the process of a dismemberment abortion, as well as other dismemberment.

Abortion pills. How do they work? They literally starve the child to death. That is how they work. I work on global hunger and food insecurity issues in my district and throughout the country and world all the time. How does the abortion pill work? It starves the baby to death.

Please, Mr. Speaker, I call on my colleagues to not force taxpayers to facilitate abortion on demand.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI).

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to stand here beside my women colleagues in support of this very important motion. As they have shared, we have an essential duty to protect the rights of our servicemembers, their reproductive rights. We protect the decisions that they must be able to make about their own body.

When servicemembers volunteer, they know that they will be making sacrifices. They know that they will have to follow orders. They know that they will have to take on hard missions and do whatever is necessary to defend our country. One thing they did not sign up for is to sacrifice their fundamental medical care and their fundamental rights to their own body.

Access to medical care has a direct impact on military readiness. I am very surprised to find that the very people that are claiming to care about our military's capability and readiness are pushing policies which will actively degrade our fighting forces.

Denying access to medical care sends a loud and clear message to every woman in the military now and to every other woman that may want to join the military; that is, your reproductive rights will not be honored or will not even exist should you join the military.

That is a message that will be sent to 18 percent of the women who make up our military today, and it will send the same message to every other woman who might want to join the military in the future.

The policies that are in this bill will chase women away from what they want; that is, to patriotically serve our country in the military. It is the wrong message.

This particular instruction should pass this House if we care about the readiness of our military.

□ 1300

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Alabama has 18 minutes remaining.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FALLON), an outstanding member of the Armed Services Committee.

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I have heard a lot of claims, some of them very hyperbolic and some of which I would classify as drivel from some of the prior speakers.

It is one thing to disagree, but we should at least be truthful. Let's look at the amendment itself, section 716, lines 9 through 14: The Department of Defense may not use any funds for abortions except where the life of the mother would be endangered if the fetus were carried to term or in a case where the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest.

Let's be truthful, Mr. Speaker. At least we are making some progress. Some of the Members, our friends across the aisle, have actually used the term "woman" instead of "birthing person." That is something that has, I think at least for me, given me some hope.

The question before us is a simple one: Are we a rule of law nation or not?

Secretary Austin's decision to pay servicemembers to pursue abortions is a clear violation of current law, the Hyde amendment.

We are hearing "necessary healthcare." Is it necessary healthcare, or is it an elective abortion? Necessary healthcare in the case of, let's say, rape is already covered under the Hyde amendment.

Don't paint us with some wide brush to say that we want to take that right away. I would submit that many Republicans want to protect women that have been impregnated because of rape.

That is absurd, and it really is very unfair.

Is the DOD complying with Federal law right now or not? This policy does it by prohibiting funding. The NDAA is simply ensuring we maintain the protections that are already enshrined in current law.

Again, it is one thing to disagree, but to make these hyperbolic, untrue claims doesn't serve the purposes of a spirited exchange of ideas or an honest debate.

Secretary Austin, if you want to be honest, is playing politics. If he would simply follow the law, 300 general and flag officers would get the promotions that they are due.

The only people who are jeopardizing readiness right now are Secretary Austin and President Biden and his administration.

Our bill puts an end to this nonsense once and for all. I support the amendment.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Pennsylvania has 8 minutes remaining.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOULTON).

Mr. MOULTON. Mr. Speaker, my Republican colleagues often blame the military's current recruitment crisis on DEI initiatives. They say the military is becoming too woke and that it is driving away recruits.

The only problem with that is that the survey data we have actually says the exact opposite. It says that what recruits are concerned about is being welcomed into an organization that will accept who they are.

With this anti-abortion policy, Republicans are effectively telling 50 percent of America and 20 percent of our current fighting force: You are not welcome here because of who you are.

If you are a White guy, you are probably fine. If you are a woman, sorry, you are a second-class citizen. You don't have the healthcare options that the rest of us have.

It is no wonder that every branch except the Marine Corps is struggling to meet recruitment goals.

Instead of seriously focusing on how we deter a war with China, we are having politically motivated debates in this Chamber over a woman's private healthcare decisions.

What my Republican colleagues won't say is that the DOD's abortion travel policy does not even pay for this medical care. It doesn't even pay for it. It simply allows a woman who has put her life on the line for our country the necessary leave if she is stationed in a State where abortions are not available.

I voted against the NDAA because it doesn't support our servicemembers. It makes them political pawns. It is a slap in the face to every woman who serves or might consider it in the future. We need to treat women with the respect they deserve for serving our country.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. HOUCHIN).

Mrs. HOUCHIN. Mr. Speaker, let me start by saying killing a baby is not healthcare if it is done in an elective abortion. Clearly, the Hyde amendment gives exceptions for life of the mother, rape, and incest.

Mr. Speaker, we shouldn't really have to be here talking about this issue today, but we are. The amendment we are speaking in support of today would repeal the Department of Defense's policy that facilitates elective abortion at

taxpayers' expense. Whether those funds are for travel or any other purpose related to abortion, they are illegal.

Mr. Speaker, it seems pretty cut and dry to me and many of my colleagues that what the Department of Defense is doing now is not in line with longstanding and current law, according to the Hyde amendment.

While the administration might disagree with the Supreme Court's decision with respect to Dobbs, that does not give them the right to circumvent the law. Taxpayer funds should not be spent on elective abortion, period.

Republicans are not the ones polarizing this country or injecting wokeness and politics into the institutions entrusted with our defense. It is quite the contrary.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from Indiana.

Mrs. HOUCHIN. Mr. Speaker, what we are trying to do is strip those things out of the Department of Defense and return them to their sacred duty of defending the country.

I voted in support of this amendment during the House consideration of the NDAA because it was the right thing to do.

As the House just agreed to proceed in conference, I strongly encourage House conferees to advocate for its inclusion in the final product in conference.

This is an issue about the rule of law and pushing back on an administration that has demonstrated its appetite to ignore it.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman of the Armed Services Committee for his leadership as we head into conference.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. ALFORD), a great member of the Armed Services Committee.

Mr. ALFORD. Mr. Speaker, today, I stand with my colleagues to oppose the motion to obstruct and to repeal facilitating abortions funded by the Department of Defense and, in effect, taxpayers.

Following the Supreme Court's landmark Dobbs decision, the Biden administration sought ways to bypass the ruling. They have encouraged Federal agencies to not only expand abortion access but also to burden American taxpayers with the cost.

Last October, the Secretary of Defense released a memo titled: "Ensuring Access to Reproductive Health Care." Let's get something straight, Mr. Speaker. There is nothing reproductive about abortion. Abortion ends a life. It does not reproduce.

This memo paves the way for taxpayer money to facilitate abortion for servicemembers and their dependents. It even allows for the reimbursement of

travel expenses for those seeking abortions in another State. Taxpayer funds for the DOD are meant for national defense, not to further a pro-abortion agenda.

Let me be clear, Mr. Speaker. We believe in life-affirming care for the mother and the baby that God is growing inside of her, but we also believe that the government in no way, no shape, and no form should be paying to facilitate ending that life.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to back this amendment and defeat the motion to obstruct. Let's save some lives.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. VAN DUYNE).

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this motion, although I will admit that it is very nice to hear my Democrat colleagues are finally concerned with military recruitment.

I wish they were worried about military recruitment when they were voting to kick out of the military members who didn't want to get the jab or when they were voting to support the botched Afghanistan withdrawal that led to so many unnecessary deaths.

They seem to have already changed the recruitment videos from "Be All You Can Be" to come and get an abortion. How proud they must be.

This is no more than a Federal power grab usurping State laws that were legally and constitutionally created by State legislators elected by a majority of voters from each State.

This is a Federal power grab by a party intent on forcing its radical political agenda down the throats of Americans, who overwhelmingly don't want it.

As President Biden and my colleagues on the other side of the aisle know, the Hyde amendment, which President Biden supported for decades, explicitly prohibits Federal dollars from being used for taxpayer-funded abortions. Nearly 60 percent of Americans agree that taxpayer dollars should not be used to fund abortions.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Colorado (Mrs. BOEBERT).

Mrs. BOEBERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose the motion to instruct conferees to not include Representative RONNY JACKSON's amendment in the fiscal year 2024 NDAA.

This policy is a gross misuse of taxpayer dollars to circumvent State laws and violates the decades-old, bipartisan Hyde amendment.

It is clear that Joe Biden and Lloyd Austin's Department of Defense is more focused on appeasing the woke mob of pink-hat-wearing feminists than focusing on keeping our Nation safe.

This is the same DOD that surrendered to the Taliban, costing the lives

of 13 brave servicemembers. This is the same DOD treating our military like a woke social experiment. This is the same DOD the House will vote to fund later this week.

The Department of Defense should be focused on readiness and lethality, not spending taxpayer dollars to kill the lives of innocent, unborn babies.

We are not going to give up on this cause that is righteous, and we are not going to stop fighting to give voice to the voiceless.

Since Roe v. Wade in 1973, over 63 million lives have been lost to abortion. I personally have held a newborn baby born at 23 weeks old, 1 pound, 8 ounces. I know that her life has just the same worth and value as any one of us standing here today.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague, Congressman RONNY JACKSON, for his leadership in restoring our military focus and protecting these precious unborn lives.

I am proud to stand with my colleagues in defense of these children, as well as with millions of Americans across our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose this motion to instruct.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like very much, Mr. Speaker, if I could ask you to ask my colleagues to not presume to judge who I am.

I stand here as a woman who has worn the uniform, who has given birth while wearing the uniform. To have assumptions about who I am or what I am and to judge me or any of my other colleagues who have worn the uniform is an offense to me, and I would ask that you advise them not to presume anything about me.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, this provision protects life and restores sanity to the Department of Defense.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to oppose the motion, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, a far-right minority in Congress has spent the last 9 months holding this process, this NDAA, hostage—again, a reminder that this passed with overwhelming bipartisan support. They are currently struggling to even pass a rule for Defense appropriations, let alone to pass the budget itself.

They have gone through attacks on servicewomen, on LGBTQ servicemembers, on immigrant servicemembers, and so much more. Their allies in the Senate are risking our military readiness with asinine confirmation holds and ignoring the repeated requests of our most senior military members to stop.

Time and time again, they have used must-pass, historically bipartisan legislation such as the NDAA to force an extreme agenda on our servicemembers and many others in our country.

As an Air Force veteran and as a proud military child who lived and served across this great country and in many other places outside of this country, I did so with the full protections of Roe v. Wade.

It not only saddens me but also pains me to think that we would give servicewomen orders without the full reproductive freedoms and protections that I had when I was able to serve.

□ 1315

Today, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to choose to be on the side of our servicemembers, military families, and all Americans who love and support them by supporting this motion to instruct.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WEBER of Texas). All time for debate has expired.

Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to instruct.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 15 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1350

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BABIN) at 1 o'clock and 50 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed. Votes will be taken in the following order:

Motion to instruct conferees on H.R. 2670; and

Motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 1530, if ordered.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.