

Statement on the 75th Anniversary of Women's Integration in to the Armed Forces
June 12, 2023

Seventy-five years ago today, President Truman signed into law the Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948, officially opening service to women in the United States military. On this significant anniversary, we celebrate the contributions and sacrifices women in uniform have made for our country and recommit to breaking down remaining barriers to their service, because we cannot outcompete our adversaries, nor rise to meet our greatest global challenges, without their talents, skills, and courage.

Since the beginning of our Nation's story, more than 3 million women have stepped up to serve, beginning long before they were a conventional part of our military. Women played an especially critical role in World War II, when all-women auxiliary units were stood up in every service branch to support the war effort. Their contributions were critical to the Allied victory and made clear that the U.S. military is stronger with women in the force. Following the Integration Act of 1948, barriers to women's full participation in our military persisted, but we continued to take steps to better harness the courage and contributions of women servicemembers. In 1973, with the establishment of the All-Volunteer Force, the military accelerated its recruitment of women. Two years later, the Military Service Academies welcomed their first class of women cadets and midshipmen. In 2013, when I was Vice President, all combat positions were finally opened to women. And as Commander in Chief, I have nominated women to the senior most command roles in our Armed Forces, including the Commanders of two Combatant Commands, the first female Service Chief, and first female Military Academy Superintendent.

As we celebrate this progress, we also recognize that our work is not yet done to ensure women servicemembers are able to have fulfilling careers in the U.S. Armed Forces and reach their highest potential. That is why my administration has focused on tackling the challenges that disproportionately affect women's recruitment and retention. Under my administration, the military departments have made strides in updating standards for fitness, expanding options for hair, dress and appearance, improving the availability of gender-specific gear and equipment, including better fitting uniforms for pregnant servicemembers.

We have advanced military justice reforms, critically removing the investigation and prosecution of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and domestic violence from the chain of command. We have enacted new policies to ensure access to reproductive health care for women servicemembers. We have taken historic steps to ensure women veterans—the fastest growing population served by the Department of Veterans Affairs—have equitable access to benefits and services, including reproductive health care. And the Department of Defense, in partnership with Jill's Joining Forces initiative, has accelerated progress for military families to access quality, affordable childcare and strengthened our support for the careers of our military spouses so that women in uniform don't have to choose between their love of family and love of country.

The diversity of our military—like our country—is our greatest strength. Today, as we mark the 75th anniversary of women's integration in the Armed Forces, and will soon celebrate the 75th anniversary of racial integration later this summer, let us remember that our Nation is stronger—and our people are safer—when we draw on the talents of every qualified patriot who raises their hand to serve our Nation. Together, let us continue to honor the tenacity, heroism, and grit of our women servicemembers and veterans. And let us renew our commitment to breaking down the remaining barriers to women's advancement, opportunity, and well-being in the

military, recognizing their indispensable place in the finest fighting force in the history of the world.

NOTE: The statement referred to Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson, USA, commander, U.S. Southern Command; Gen. Jacqueline D. Van Ovost, USAF, Commander, U.S. Transportation Command; Commandant Adm. Linda L. Fagan, USCG, of the U.S. Coast Guard; and Rear Adm. Yvette Davids, USN, Superintendent, U.S. Naval Academy.

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Names: Biden, Jill T.; Davids, Yvette; Fagan, Linda L.; Richardson, Laura J.; Van Ovost, Jacqueline D.

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