

**Statement on the 50th Anniversary of the All-Volunteer Force**  
*July 1, 2023*

Fifty years ago today, the military draft ended, creating the All-Volunteer Force. On this historic anniversary, we recognize all the brave women and men who have raised their hand to serve. And together, we recommit to sustaining and strengthening our force for decades to come, including by demonstrating our support for our servicemembers and our veterans, as well as their families, caregivers, and survivors.

The success of the All-Volunteer Force was not inevitable. Fifty years ago, there were questions as to whether we could attract the talent our military needed or whether Americans would answer the call to serve. But today, we see so clearly that the 11 million women and men who have joined Active Duty service over the last five decades—and the 4 million more who have joined our National Guard and Reserve forces—are the reason why our military remains the greatest fighting force in the history of the world. At our bases, outposts, and vessels around the world, these women and men have stepped up to answer freedom's call, many of whom have volunteered for multiple combat tours. They have taken on our Nation's toughest missions, risking their own safety to protect the safety of their fellow Americans. And, year after year, they have made our Nation stronger and more secure.

To keep our force strong and ready to meet the challenges and deter the threats of the future, we must continue to recruit the best of American talent and draw on the contributions of every qualified patriot who raises their hand to serve. That's why my administration has been focused on honoring our promises to our servicemembers and veterans, as well as their families, caregivers, and survivors. Earlier this year, I directed the Department of Defense to review pay and benefits for our military members, because our force and their families deserve a 21st-century compensation system that reflects their service and sacrifice. Last month, I signed an Executive order that establishes the most comprehensive set of administrative actions in decades to support the economic security of military and veteran spouses, caregivers, and survivors. With bipartisan support, I have signed more than 25 bills to support our Nation's veterans, including the PACT Act, the most significant law in our Nation's history to help the millions of veterans who were exposed to fumes from burn pits or other toxic substances during their service. The First Lady, through her Joining Forces initiative, continues to support those who serve alongside our Active Duty military members, including their family members, caregivers, and survivors. Last month, I signed an Executive order that establishes the most comprehensive set of administrative actions in decades to support the economic security of military and veteran spouses, caregivers, and survivors.

In a year when we are also honoring the 75th anniversary of the desegregation of our Armed Forces and the 75th anniversary of women's full integration into our military, we also recognize the undeniable truth that the diversity of our military, like our Nation, is our greatest strength. And, since day one, my administration has worked to ensure that everyone qualified to wear our Nation's uniform can do so with dignity and safe in the knowledge that their talents will be fully valued, including by reversing the ban on openly transgender people serving in the military and reforming how the military investigates and prosecutes sexual assault and sexual harassment.

I have long believed that we have a truly sacred obligation as a nation to properly prepare and equip those we send into harm's way and to care for them and their families, both while they are deployed and when they return home. So today, as we mark this important milestone, Jill and I invite you to join us in celebrating the brave women and men who have volunteered to take up

the cause of our great nation over the last 50 years. Let us thank their families, caregivers, and survivors and all those who have stood beside them every step of the way. And together, let us honor their service and sacrifice by renewing our commitment to strengthening and sustaining our All-Volunteer Force for all the years ahead.

*Categories:* Statements by the President : All-Volunteer Force, 50th anniversary.

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