

113TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2291

To require that Peace Corps volunteers be subject to the same limitations regarding coverage of abortion services as employees of the Peace Corps with respect to coverage of such services, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 6, 2014

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. BOXER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. WARREN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BROWN, Mr. COONS, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. MARKEY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To require that Peace Corps volunteers be subject to the same limitations regarding coverage of abortion services as employees of the Peace Corps with respect to coverage of such services, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Peace Corps Equity
5 Act of 2014”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress makes the following findings:

3 (1) Women of the United States, particularly
4 women serving the United States overseas, deserve a
5 basic standard of care when it comes to their health.

6 (2) Since its founding in 1961, the Peace Corps
7 has advanced interests of the United States by work-
8 ing to promote peace and friendship between the
9 United States and the 139 nations in which the
10 Peace Corps has operated.

11 (3) Over the past 50 years, more than 210,000
12 Peace Corps volunteers have served the United
13 States by working in developing countries to address
14 needs in areas such as education, health, youth and
15 community development, business and information
16 and communications technology, agriculture, and the
17 environment.

18 (4) More than 60 percent of the more than
19 8,000 current Peace Corps volunteers are women.

20 (5) Peace Corps volunteers face inherent risks
21 to their safety and security by virtue of living and
22 working abroad.

23 (6) Data from the Peace Corps from 2000 to
24 2009 indicate that more than 1,000 Peace Corps
25 volunteers experienced sexual assaults, including 221
26 rapes or attempted rapes. Data from the Peace

1 Corps also show that incidents of sexual assault and
2 rape against volunteers often go unreported.

3 (7) Recognizing the high incidence of sexual as-
4 sault in the Peace Corps, Congress enacted the Kate
5 Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act of
6 2011 (Public Law 112–57) to strengthen protections
7 and support for sexual assault survivors.

8 (8) Since fiscal year 1979, annual appropria-
9 tions Acts have prohibited the Peace Corps from
10 covering abortion services for its volunteers (includ-
11 ing trainees), even in cases of rape, incest, and life
12 endangerment of the woman. Employees of the
13 Peace Corps, on the other hand, are provided this
14 coverage.

15 (9) Abortion services in cases of rape, incest,
16 and life endangerment of the woman are now avail-
17 able to almost all groups of women of the United
18 States covered by Federal law, except Peace Corps
19 volunteers.

20 (10) Abortion coverage in cases of rape, incest,
21 and life endangerment of the woman is available to
22 most women, excluding Peace Corps volunteers, cov-
23 ered under Federal health plans, including employ-
24 ees covered by the Federal Employee Health Bene-
25 fits Program, servicewomen covered by TRICARE,

1 Native Americans covered by the Indian Health
 2 Service, women inmates and immigration detainees,
 3 and Medicaid and Medicare recipients.

4 (11) There is no rational basis for denying
 5 Peace Corps volunteers a basic health care benefit
 6 that is extended to other women covered under Fed-
 7 eral health care plans.

8 **SEC. 3. EQUITABLE TREATMENT OF PEACE CORPS VOLUN-**
 9 **TEERS AND EMPLOYEES WITH RESPECT TO**
 10 **COVERAGE OF ABORTION SERVICES.**

11 Section 5(e) of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C.
 12 2504(e)) is amended—

13 (1) by striking “(e) Volunteers” and inserting
 14 the following:

15 “(e) HEALTH CARE.—

16 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Volunteers”; and

17 (2) by adding at the end the following:

18 “(2) EQUITABLE TREATMENT OF VOLUNTEERS
 19 AND EMPLOYEES WITH RESPECT TO COVERAGE OF
 20 ABORTION SERVICES.—

21 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Coverage of abortion
 22 services by the Peace Corps for volunteers shall
 23 be subject to the same limitations as those that
 24 apply to employees of the Peace Corps with re-

1 spect to coverage by the Peace Corps of abor-
2 tion services.

3 “(B) APPLICABILITY.—Subparagraph (A)
4 shall apply notwithstanding any provision of
5 law, including a provision of law enacted after
6 the date of the enactment of the Peace Corps
7 Equity Act of 2014, unless such law explicitly
8 excludes application of subparagraph (A) by
9 reference to such subparagraph.

10 “(C) CONSTRUCTION.—This paragraph
11 shall not be construed to limit coverage of med-
12 ical evacuations.”.

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