

(1) to any veteran, any fertility treatment using assisted reproductive technology;

(2) any fertility counseling or treatment under section 1788 of title 38, United States Code, as added by section 3; or

(3) any assistance under section 1789 of such title, as added by section 4.

**SEC. 7. COORDINATION WITH DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ON FURNISHING OF FERTILITY COUNSELING AND TREATMENT.**

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall coordinate the furnishing of fertility counseling and treatment by the Department of Veterans Affairs with the furnishing of fertility counseling and treatment by the Department of Defense.

**SEC. 8. FUNDING.**

Amounts for a fiscal year to carry out this Act, section 7330B of title 38, United States Code, as added by section 2(a), section 1787 of such title, as added by section 4(a), and the amendments made by this Act shall be derived from amounts made available for an overseas contingency operation in that fiscal year, if amounts were made available for an overseas contingency operation in that fiscal year.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported title amendment be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate, and that any related statements be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The title amendment was agreed to, as follows:

Amend the title so as to read: "A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the reproductive assistance provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs to severely wounded, ill, or injured veterans and their spouses, and for other purposes."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, the Senate has just passed legislation that will bring into focus a real need for the VA to help women veterans and the spouses of male veterans access assistance for one of the most impactful and serious wounds of these wars—reproductive and urinary tract trauma.

As many of my colleagues know, the nature of the current conflict we are involved in and the use of improvised explosive devices leave our servicemembers far more susceptible to very serious injuries, such as reproductive and urinary tract trauma. Army data shows that between 2003 and 2011, we had 2,000 servicemembers suffering from these kinds of injuries. Like so many of our veterans, these men and women come home and want to return to their lives, to find employment and to start a family. But today, when they go to the VA, the fertility services that are available don't meet the very complex needs of these serious injuries. In fact, veterans who have suffered from these injuries find that the VA is specifically barred from providing more advanced assisted reproductive techniques, such as in vitro fertilization. They are, in fact, told—despite the fact that they have made such an extreme

sacrifice for our country—that they can't be provided with the medical services they need to start a family.

One of those veterans I have come to know is SSG Matt Keil and his wife Tracy, who are here with us today. Staff Sergeant Keil, whom I talked about this morning, was shot in the neck while he was on patrol in Ramadi, Iraq, on February 24, 2007, just 6 weeks after he married Tracy. Staff Sergeant Keil instantly became a quadriplegic. Later, when he came home and they wanted to start a family, Tracy and Matt were faced with the fact that they could not access IVF services through the VA, which meant they had to pay \$32,000 out of their own pocket.

Mr. President, the bill we passed today means those families who are coming behind Tracy and Matt won't have to go through the same fight to take care of something that is so vital to so many American families; that is, having a family of their own. This is an important step we have taken today in passing this out of the Senate. I am hopeful that the House will take it up and pass it. And I assure Tracy and Matt that one day, when this bill is signed into law, they will have made a true difference for those families who come behind them, and for that I am eternally grateful.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I wish to commend Senator MURRAY before she leaves the floor for her tireless dedication to America's Armed Forces, for her commitment to our veterans and her passion for addressing their very real and very human needs, and for bringing examples from her home community as well as from our country at large of just how much we owe our veterans and in just how many different ways they face challenges as they try to move forward with their lives after their service for us. I wanted to thank her and recognize the Senator from Washington.

**MORNING BUSINESS**

**376TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL GUARD**

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, one of the best things about a good day in the Senate is when we get a chance to visit with friends from home. Earlier today, I had a chance to visit with the Hopkins family. They run a small business in Delaware. And I have had the great joy of spending time with our U.S. Congressman, JOHN CARNEY, our incoming speaker of the house, Pete Schwarzkopf, and friend Quin Johnson today. All of this has brought to mind something I wanted to speak to for a moment, if I might.

I rise today to mark the 376th anniversary of a great American institution that is critical to our safety here and abroad—the National Guard.

The National Guard goes back to the citizen soldier tradition of our colonial-era militia of citizens who took up arms or who came together for collective action in times of natural disaster or of threat. The National Guard today, 376 years later, still has that dual mission—to serve our communities by responding to domestic emergencies and to deploy, when needed, to serve and protect our Nation overseas. While they do all this, they also often hold down full-time civilian jobs. In their daily lives, National Guard troops are teachers and police officers, firefighters and office workers. When called upon by their Governor or Commander in Chief, they change their uniforms and report for duty as civilian soldiers.

In my home State, our Delaware National Guard is on the front lines every day, whether keeping our streets safe after a storm, deploying to Iraq or Afghanistan, or traveling to other parts of the country to help our citizens recover and cities rebuild in the wake of a natural disaster. Organized and managed so capably by Major General Frank Vavala, the Delaware National Guard has the capability to keep us safe. They transport people and supplies on land and through the air. They defend our Nation in cyber space. They support law enforcement's fight against illegal drugs. They are on the scene of any suspicious chemical or biological event, and they enable friendly forces to communicate with each other in war zones.

When duty calls, the Delaware National Guard is there. The 153rd Military Police Company, for example, was deployed to Iraq, where they logged hundreds of combat patrols on some of the most dangerous streets in the world and trained Iraqi police officers in all aspects of their profession. In January, this unit will deploy again, this time to Afghanistan.

The 126th Medical Aviation Battalion was deployed to Afghanistan, where they flew 400 priority medevac missions for over 500 critically injured patients, about half to unsecured landing zones outside of secure walls or fortified structures.

These are just two examples of the many ways the Delaware Guard protects our Nation overseas. But they are also vital to our security here at home. When there is a blizzard, the National Guard uses their humvees and heavy trucks to transport Delawareans with medical emergencies. When Superstorm Sandy struck last month, 120 soldiers traveled with heavy equipment to assist with recovery efforts in New York and New Jersey. When Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans in 2005, two C-130 aircraft left from New Castle airports the next day carrying the first of what would be 400 troops from Delaware who assisted with gulf coast recovery efforts.

The National Guard is resourceful, ready to serve, and they go everywhere they are called. These are truly citizen-soldiers.

When I was the county executive of New Castle County, Delaware, we had as many as seven different county employees at different times deployed overseas, many of them police officers called up for their National Guard service—folks who are the epitome of serving at home and serving abroad. So it is with a very personal sense of the needs and the challenges when I thank those employers who recognize that even when they are not at their desks, even when they are not contributing to their employer, our National Guard members are making a vital contribution to our community and to our country.

Tomorrow morning I am going to the Pentagon, where I will talk with leaders there about critical needs in an age of ongoing budget austerity. One of the priorities I am fighting for is a responsible investment in our National Guard. These heroes deserve more than our gratitude, they deserve our rock-solid commitment to ensuring they have the resources they need to do their jobs.

The National Guard plays a unique dual role in our security—as first responders and as a reserve force for foreign conflicts. We have to make sure they have the equipment and support for both their military missions and their domestic missions.

I am proud this year the President signed into law legislation that would give the Chief of the National Guard Bureau a seat at the table, a seat on the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I was glad to work to help build bipartisan support for this bill because I believe the Joint Chiefs need someone at the table who has seen the full capabilities and range of operations and the unique challenges and resources of the National Guard firsthand.

So 376 years after its founding, the National Guard continues to grow and evolve to meet the security challenges of the United States in the 21st century. I believe the Guard of the future must continue to fulfill both sides of their vital dual mission. Additionally, it must be a place where highly skilled soldiers and airmen can continue to serve their country while also working in and serving civilian communities. The Guard can and should be a bridge between the military and civilian response to threats facing the United States, not the least of which are cyber attacks and terrorism.

On this anniversary, the National Guard remains essential to the safety and security of Americans at home and abroad, and today I would like to thank the soldiers and airmen of the Delaware National Guard as well as the entire National Guard family at home and abroad for their service and dedication to our country. Thank you, and happy birthday.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

#### THE FISCAL CLIFF

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, today I rise because middle-class families are counting on the House of Representatives to do the right thing between now and the end of the year, which is just 19 days away. The House needs to pass the middle-class tax cuts we sent them back in July.

Families need help. When we talk about the fiscal cliff, the most important one is what families are struggling with every day, and we have just 19 days until the taxes on middle-class families will go up by an average of \$2,200 if the House of Representatives doesn't act. We need to make sure that 98 percent of the American public is protected from tax increases. As we know, we passed the Middle Class Tax Cut Act on July 25. So far, the House has not acted. Nineteen days. They have 19 days until the end of this year in order to act. Time is running out.

Now, we know there is a larger discussion going on that is incredibly important—how we put together a deficit reduction plan for our country, a long-term plan for fiscal solvency and for our economy. By the way, we will never get out of debt with close to 12 million people out of work, so we better be focused on jobs and the economy, as I am each and every day.

We know we need a larger plan, but when we look at the three legs of the deficit reduction stool that everybody talks about, there has been action on two of them. There needs to be action on the third as we go forward to put together the final plan. The first step was an agreement we made last year to cut spending by about \$1 trillion. So that was the first piece, the spending cut reduction. Secondly, we needed to find savings in Medicare, which has lengthened the Medicare trust fund by 8 years. We know there is more that can be done as we look at savings going forward. We passed over \$700 billion in savings by protecting and strengthening benefits for seniors by cutting overpayments to insurance companies and making other reforms to strengthen the system and create more efficiencies.

We have seen step 1 on spending reductions of \$1 trillion. We have seen step 1 on "entitlements," as we speak of it, which is Medicare savings coming the right way, not by cutting benefits or raising the Medicare age, which I strongly oppose but, instead, by creating savings by cutting overpayments to insurance companies and other efficiencies. But what happens on the third leg of the stool, which is the requirement that the wealthiest among us come to the table and be part of the solution on revenue? That is the third leg of the stool. We continue to see no willingness to take action there.

We find ourselves in a situation where in 19 days the average American will see their taxes go up by, on average, \$2,200 because the House of Representatives has been holding middle-class families hostage to their own pol-

itics. What are we talking about when we talk about \$2,200? I asked folks around Michigan: What does that mean to you? One constituent said that is 4 months' groceries. Four months of feeding her family is what we are talking about if the House of Representatives does not act.

Mr. President, \$2,200 would buy 650 gallons of gas. For the average commuter going back and forth to work every day, that gets them back and forth to work for 3 years on the tax increase that middle-class families are facing if the House does not act.

Mr. President, \$2,200 will buy families in Michigan 550 gallons of milk for their families. We are talking about a lot of money that is at stake for families.

In many cases that number is higher than \$2,200, and House Republicans are holding families across this country hostage at Christmastime over a fight about whether millionaires and billionaires in this country should pay a little bit more to solve our long-term deficit problem.

It is unbelievable to me that we continue to see this kind of inaction coming from the House of Representatives. We all know this can be done in just a few moments. We can send a very strong message to 98 percent of American families, 97 percent of small businesses, that they can go into the Christmas season knowing they are going to continue to get tax cuts in the new year.

I can assure you, in times when families are struggling now, when they want to provide a good Christmas for their families, we are seeing things like layaway—layaway is back because families are having to use a longer time to pay for toys and clothes and other things for their children for Christmas. Mr. President, \$2,200 is a lot of money. There is a lot of uncertainty right now because the House of Representatives has not acted. It is time to get this done.

Everybody says they support the bill we passed. We have a growing chorus of colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle in the Senate and in the House—we have business leaders and people across the country—who all agree we are never going to be able to address our deficit reduction problems without those who are wealthiest among us helping to solve the problem. That is all this is about.

The House needs to get this done. Then we know there is a larger piece. All three legs of the deficit reduction chair need to be addressed, but now the only one where nothing has been done is asking people who are most blessed economically to chip in a little bit more.

#### RIGHT-TO-WORK LAWS

If I might add one more thing that relates to something else happening in Michigan that goes to the heart of the issue about whether we are going to have a middle class in this country, and that is what the Governor and the