

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2024

The Honorable Denis R. McDonough
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary McDonough,

We are writing to express our strong objections over the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recent announcement that it will expand in vitro fertilization (IVF) to eligible unmarried Veterans and eligible Veterans in same-sex marriages.¹ The announcement creates a plethora of ethical concerns and questions.

We appreciate some of the steps that the VA has taken to help veterans who are unable to have children, specifically providing for reimbursement of adoption expenses.² There are around 400,000 children in foster care nationwide, and approximately 117,000 are waiting to be adopted.³ The VA also provides fertility and infertility care to help veterans who struggle with infertility. It would make more sense to use the funds that the expansion of IVF will cost to bolster adoption efforts at the VA.

IVF is morally dubious and should not be subsidized by the American taxpayer. It is well known that IVF treatments result in a surplus of embryos after the best ones are tested and selected. These embryos are then frozen—at significant cost to the parents—abandoned, or cruelly discarded. Parents’ uncertainty of what to do with the additional embryos and inclination to leave them frozen for many years rather than discarding them points to their inherent humanity. The new VA policy is shocking not only on a moral level, but on a political and legal level as well. The press release announcing this new policy states, “VA has advocated for this IVF expansion for years, including submitting repeated legislative proposals to expand IVF services at VA.”⁴ As a result, we are asking for a response to the following questions:

1. What does the VA plan to do with the surplus embryos?
2. How many embryos has the VA already destroyed or frozen? How many additional embryos do you expect to destroy or freeze?
3. Where will the VA store embryos, and who will pay for the storage?

¹ <https://news.va.gov/press-room/va-expands-in-vitro-fertilization-for-veterans/>

² <https://www.womenshealth.va.gov/WOMENSHEALTH/topics/adoption-expense-reimbursement.asp#:~:text=If%20you%20are%20a%20covered,minor%20children%20with%20special%20needs.>

³ <https://www.adoptuskids.org/meet-the-children/children-in-foster-care/about-the-children#:~:text=How%20many%20children%20are%20awaiting,are%20waiting%20to%20be%20adopted.>

⁴ <https://news.va.gov/press-room/va-expands-in-vitro-fertilization-for-veterans/>

4. How much will the expansion of IVF cost the VA?
5. What specific law did Congress pass that has given the VA this additional authority?
6. If the VA always had this authority, why is the announcement being made right now which includes a reference to a legislative request to authorize it?

It appears that either the VA always had this authority and is responding to the appeals of activists or is possibly violating existing law. A few of my Democrat colleagues have previously introduced legislation to expand IVF at the VA, a tacit acknowledgement that the VA does not have authority under existing law to make this kind of announcement. The VA must focus on providing world-class healthcare and benefits to veterans, not trying to remake the nuclear family. We appreciate your attention to this letter and eagerly await your reply.

Sincerely,



Matthew M. Rosendale, Sr.
Member of Congress



Mary Miller
Member of Congress



Josh Brecheen
Member of Congress



Bob Good
Member of Congress