

113<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. R. 4578

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.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 6, 2014

Mrs. LOWEY (for herself, Mr. FARR, Mr. HONDA, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. GARAMENDI) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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## 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”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

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

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

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

16           (4) More than 60 percent of the more than  
17 8,000 current Peace Corps volunteers are women.

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

21           (6) Data from the Peace Corps from 2000 to  
22 2009 indicate that more than 1,000 Peace Corps  
23 volunteers experienced sexual assaults, including 221  
24 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 the limita-  
24 tions that apply to employees of the Peace

1 Corps with respect to coverage by the Peace  
2 Corps of such 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 such subparagraph by  
9 reference to such subparagraph.

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

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