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## FEW Washington Legislative Update June 1-15, 2024

### IN CONGRESS:

With the House and Senate in Washington for a limited amount of time this week due to [congressional delegations](#) to Normandy for D-Day events, the Senate is expected to vote today on a bill that would guarantee access to contraception nationwide. The bill – the [Right to Contraception Act](#) – would enshrine into federal law a right for individuals to buy and use contraceptives, as well as for health care providers to provide them. It would apply to birth control pills, the plan B pill, condoms, and other forms of contraception. The legislation is expected to fail to advance in a procedural vote. The vote is part of a larger push by the Majority members in the Senate to draw attention to how the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade has affected all aspects of reproductive health – not just abortion. Many women groups are highlighting the issue this month, which marks the two-year anniversary of the high court's [ruling](#).

For today, June 5, 2024 the Senate is also considering confirmation of the [nomination](#) of Judith E. Pipe to be an Associate Judge of the D.C. Superior Court and a Motion to invoke cloture on the [nomination](#) of Stephanie Sanders Sullivan to be Representative to the African Union, with the rank and status of Ambassador. Later this afternoon, the Senate is expected to take up the Motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to [S.4381](#), Right to Contraception Act as mentioned above.

The House has been in for a brief session this week, and in addition to naming [24 post offices](#), House Majority on Wednesday, June 5, 2024 passed their first funding bill for fiscal 2025, [H.R. 8580](#) – Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2025 laying out a proposed blueprint for the Veterans Affairs (VA) Department and military construction that also includes a list of partisan riders. The House passed the legislation [209-197](#) on Wednesday morning, despite a [veto threat](#) from the White House, as the Majority in the House conference plows ahead with an aggressive plan to pass 12 annual spending bills before the August recess. Four Democrats voted in favor of the measure, while two Republicans opposed it.

The House will next be in [session](#) on Tuesday, June 11<sup>th</sup>.

### **FEW In Action – June 1-15, 2024**

FEW recently announced the **2024 Advocacy Day scheduled for July 23 – 25, 2024** in Washington, DC.

Thank you to those who registered, we look forward to seeing you soon!

There is no better way to move *FEW Forward* by our influence and develop a relationship with your elected officials than in-person meetings. These events show legislators that you care enough about the issues being discussed that you have paid to fly into town, used your own vacation time and taken valuable time away from the office to meet her/him to talk about issues of concern to federally employed women.

*TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!*

### **FEW Washington Legislative Update – June 1-15, 2024**

#### **Tier I**

#### Federal Women:

On Wednesday, June 12, 2024, [H.Res.1296](#) - Expressing support for the designation of June 12, 2024, as "Women Veterans Appreciation Day" - was introduced in the House and referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability. (A summary will be available soon)

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#### **Tier II**

#### Federal Workforce:

Several messaging bills were recently introduced in the House and Senate. On Wednesday, June 12, 2024, [H.R. 8706/S.4516](#) - To ensure equal protection of the law, to prevent racism in the Federal Government, and for other purposes - was introduced

in the House and Senate and referred to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, Education and the Workforce, Armed Services, Foreign Affairs, Financial Services, Energy and Commerce, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Intelligence (Permanent Select), for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned, and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

House Oversight Committee:

The [House Oversight](#) Committee is kick-starting an investigation into how often government employees engage in [union](#) activities while on the clock. The House Oversight Committee Chairman [James Comer](#) (R-KY), on the Oversight Subcommittee on Government Operations and the Federal Workforce Chairman Pete Sessions (R-TX), and Rep. Scott Perry (R-PA) sent letters to the 23 agencies on Wednesday requesting documents and information related to employees engaging in union duties on government time.

The committee is asking for all of the agencies to provide the requested information by June 20. Among the requested information is the total number of all employees in a particular agency who used 100 percent official time during fiscal 2021, 2022, and 2023, as well as their salaries; the total number of employees who used official time in any amount during those time periods; and the aggregate number of official times used by agency employees and the costs the agency accrued during those time periods. (Source: Washington Examiner)

## **FEW Washington Legislative Update – June 1-15, 2024**

### **Tier III**

#### Women as a Class:

##### Women's Reproductive Health and IVF

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said Tuesday, June 4, that he had already begun the process of bringing a legislative package aimed at protecting Americans' access to assistive reproductive technology to the floor for a vote.

On Monday, Sens. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., Patty Murray, D-Wash., and Cory Booker, D-N.J., introduced the Right to IVF Act, a repackaging of three separate previously introduced bills on reproductive health services.

Included is the Family Building FEHB Fairness Act, first [introduced last year](#) by Duckworth, which would require the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program to cover additional costs associated with IVF, and would expand coverage to all types of assisted reproductive technology, such as gamete and zygote intrafallopian transfer.

Lawmakers began pressuring the federal government to provide better access to assistive reproductive technologies in 2022, when they first asked the Office of Personnel Management to require insurance carriers participating in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program to improve their coverage of the procedures and related medications. Beginning this year, all FEHB carriers are required to cover artificial insemination, drugs associated with artificial insemination, and IVF-related drug costs for three cycles annually.

In April, lawmakers again asked OPM to [expand IVF coverage](#) under the government's employer-sponsored insurance program, this time pushing for carriers to "fully" cover the procedure and related drugs.

The renewed focus on assisted reproductive technologies comes in part from a February ruling from the Alabama Supreme Court that endangered its legality and temporarily halted IVF services in the state. The state legislature ultimately passed legislation to protect those treatments in March.

As the Senate prepares to consider legislation aimed at protecting Americans' access to contraceptives, Majority Leader Chuck Schumer announced he would move swiftly to bring the IVF package to the floor. On Thursday, June 13, 2024, [S.4445](#) - the Right to IVF Act was introduced by Senator Tammy Duckworth.

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