OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF WAR
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

The Honorable Mike D. Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

JUL 14 2026

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Department's response to section 709(f)(1) of the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 (Public Law 118–159), "Demonstration Program on Cryopreservation and Storage of Gametes of Certain Members of the Armed Forces," is enclosed.

This initial report outlines the Military Health System's plan for a demonstration program to reimburse covered members for expenses incurred for fertility preservation. Additionally, the report details key considerations associated with the demonstration implementation related to cost and impact on Force readiness. The Department expects the demonstration will be at full operating capability by September 2026.

Thank you for your continued strong support for the health and well-being of our Service members. I am sending a similar letter to the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Sean O'Keefe
Deputy Under Secretary of War for Personnel
and Readiness

Enclosure:
As stated

cc:
The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF WAR
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

The Honorable Roger F. Wicker
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

JUL 14 2026

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Sincerely,

[redacted]

Sean O'Keefe
Deputy Under Secretary of War for Personnel
and Readiness

cc:
The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member

Report to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives

Initial Report on Demonstration Program on Cryopreservation and Storage of Gametes of Certain Members of the Armed Forces

July 2026

The estimated cost of this report or study for the Department of War (DoW) is approximately $4,600 for the 2025 Fiscal Year. This includes $2,400 in expenses and $2,200 in DoW labor.
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INTRODUCTION

This initial report is in response to section 709(f)(1) of the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2025, "Demonstration Program on Cryopreservation and Storage of Gametes of Certain Members of the Armed Forces," which requires the Department to develop a demonstration to reimburse covered members of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Space Force on active duty for certain expenses associated with cryopreservation.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The demonstration is expected to be at full operating capability by September 2026. Key areas for the demonstration include infrastructure within the Military Health System to support a reimbursement program for non-covered health care; establishing enrollment criteria; and time limits for reimbursement of gamete storage.

COSTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

There is not a defined appropriation to cover the cost of cryopreservation for covered members. The Department estimates that between 4,800 to 24,100 women and over 4,000 men would use cryopreservation services annually, costing $48M to $240M and $2.1M respectively at the reimbursement rates prescribed in the statute.[1] This does not include administrative costs for developing the infrastructure to support the demonstration. Including infrastructure, the total estimated 3-year cost of the demonstrations ranges from $164M to $772M.

Potential out-of-pocket expenses may be prohibitive.[2] Some cryopreservation cycles will incur high costs (e.g., medication costs, multiple stimulation cycles), and those costs may be out of pocket due to reimbursement caps. While costs for such care at the few military medical treatment facilities capable of providing such care are far less (i.e., $5,300 for oocyte retrieval, $372 sperm collection), access is limited due to capacity; most care in the demonstration will be in the private sector.

Service members may not have sufficient notice of an upcoming deployment to complete the cryopreservation process within the mission timelines. Testing, preparation and retrieval of female gametes is particularly time consuming and invasive. Female Service members generally require 3 months of limited duty to reduce the risk of ovarian torsion following the retrieval, and complications associated with egg retrieval may result in the inability to deploy. The Department may need to adjust enrollment criteria to minimize impacts or disruption to deployment schedules.

Statute limits reimbursement to the retrieval, testing, cryopreservation, shipping, and storage of gametes. There is risk at each step of the process. Given the preponderance of marketing and uncontrolled lay information, the demonstration requires dissemination of clear,

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[1] Reimbursement of up to $10,000 per year for preservation of oocytes and up to $500 per year for preservation of sperm.

[2] Report to Congress, "Assisted Reproductive Technology Services for Servicemembers" August 6, 2025.

evidence-based guidance so that covered members understand risk to their gametes and real likelihood of a successful pregnancy.

CONCLUSION

The Department will establish the demonstration consistent with the requirements outlined in statute. The Department recognizes that military service presents unique challenges for family building and planning, including prolonged and unpredictable separations due to deployment and geographic separation, making fertility preservation a potential concern for Service members.