

Congresswoman Elaine G. Luria
H.R. 5738, Lactation Spaces for Veteran Moms Act
Legislative Day Hearing Statement for the Record
March 16, 2022 2:00 PM

Thank you, Chairwoman Brownley, Ranking Member Bergman, and the Health Subcommittee for your work and this opportunity. The Lactation Spaces for Veteran Moms Act is a bipartisan bill that would ensure every medical facility managed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) contains a lactation space. Rep. Jamie Herrera Beutler joined me in introducing this bill in 2021, and I want to thank her for her leadership on the issue.

This is an issue that Congress has historically addressed in a bipartisan manner, and more work needs to be done. In 2019, the Fairness for Breastfeeding Mothers Act was signed into law. That legislation required public buildings containing public restrooms to also provide a hygienic space, other than a restroom to express milk, not only for employees but members of the public as well.

Today, there are 90 VA facilities across the country with designated nursing rooms, but these spaces are only for employees of the VA. The Lactation Spaces for Veterans Moms Act would ensure that every medical facility managed by the VA contains a lactation space for women who have served our nation and our military families.

This legislation would require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that every medical facility managed by the Department contains a lactation space. Lactation spaces must be a hygienic place, other than a restroom, that is shielded from view; is free from intrusion and includes an access code/lock; is accessible to disabled individuals; contains a chair and a working surface; is easy to locate; is clearly identified with signage; and is available for use by female veterans, employees of the Department, and members of the public to express breast milk.

I urge the Committee to advance this legislation to ensure that these resources are available for every woman who serves and for military families.