



**Women in the Service Coalition, Inc.**  
**WiSCImil.org**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **WiSCI Files FOIA on Pentagon Review That Could Affect More Than 5,000 Women in Combat Arms**

**The nonprofit Women in the Service Coalition seeks records surrounding the scope, methodology, and intended use of the DOD review of women serving in ground combat roles**

WASHINGTON, DC – On Monday, August 17, 2026, the Women in the Service Coalition, Inc. (WiSCI) and journalist Hope Hodge Seck, through the Law Office of Mark S. Zaid, P.C., filed a Freedom of Information Act request with the Department of Defense, seeking greater transparency into the Pentagon’s ongoing review of women serving in ground combat roles.

The request seeks expedited processing because a compelling need exists to educate the public on this important issue and its impact on the our Armed Services. WiSCI intends to pursue litigation if the Department does not comply with its lawful obligations.

The review is not an abstract policy exercise. **More than 5,000 women are currently serving across the military in roles previously closed to them, including infantry, armor and artillery.** These service members have been recruited, trained, assessed and found qualified to perform the jobs they hold.

“For ten years, women have been serving in ground combat arms roles and have met the same standards – physical, technical, tactical, and cognitive – as the men they serve alongside,” said WiSCI Executive Director, Army veteran **Brenda S. “Sue” Fulton**. “Years of reviews have shown that it’s working. This new study appears to have no purpose other than finding ways to exclude women regardless of their proven competence. The public – and these service members – deserve to see the documents surrounding the launch of this study, why it was moved to a different research organization with less relevant expertise, and whether there is a pre-determined outcome coming from Secretary Hegseth.”

The Department of Defense initiated its review in December 2025, approximately a decade after the remaining restrictions on women serving in ground combat positions were lifted. The review was originally assigned to the Institute for Defense Analyses as a six-month independent assessment, and later reassigned to the Applied Physics Laboratory at Johns Hopkins.

WiSCI’s FOIA request seeks records that will help provide transparency regarding the Department’s decision-making process, why another review was deemed necessary, how the current assessment is being structured to measure combat effectiveness, and other key questions.

“There is a real and immediate need for clarity on how this assessment is being conducted,” said attorney **Brad Moss**. “This FOIA request seeks to obtain that information so that both lawmakers and the American public can understand the process and pose questions to Secretary Hegseth and his subordinates



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now, rather than once the die has already been cast. We are prepared to immediately bring this into Federal court to ensure the Administration cannot slow walk its response through administrative delays."

"For us, the focus is the service member," said WiSCI member Air Force veteran **Jessica Ruttenber**. "These women raised their hands, met and often exceeded the standards and have made their units smarter, stronger, and better. Policy decisions affecting thousands of qualified warfighters should be based on credible evidence, transparent methodology and the actual requirements of the mission."

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### ***About WiSCI***

The **Women in the Service Coalition, Inc.** (WiSCI, pronounced "whiskey," found at [wiscimil.org](http://wiscimil.org)) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to advocating for women and men in military service. WiSCI works to strengthen the Armed Forces through smart military personnel policies; protect opportunities for qualified servicewomen; support the development of women leaders; and ensure that service members can compete for and serve in positions based on their ability to meet the requirements of the job.