

# Women’s share of the veteran workforce is at an all-time high – but Trump’s policies threaten their success

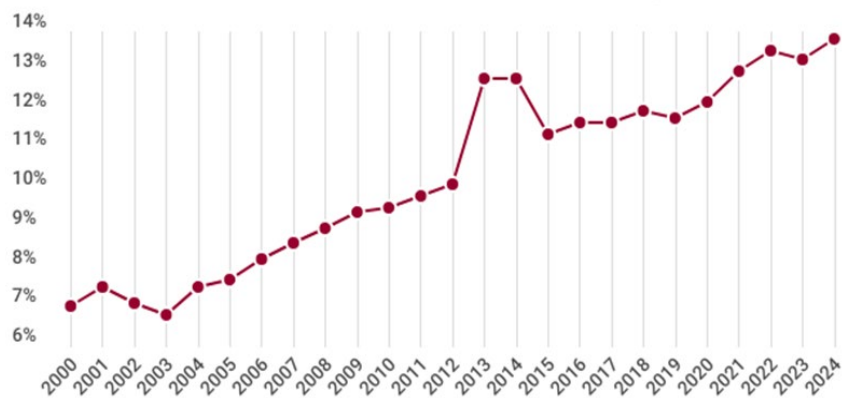
MARCH 2025

By Katherine Gallagher Robbins and Areeba Haider

National Partnership analysis of [new data released today](#) on veterans’ employment reveals that women’s share of the veterans’ workforce has nearly doubled since 2000, reaching an all-time high of 13.8 percent in 2024.

But even as women’s share of the veterans’ workforce grows, these workers’ livelihoods are under threat from policies advanced by the Trump administration – especially those championed by Elon Musk – which have created substantial risks for veterans’ employment prospects, and for women veterans in particular.

**Women’s share of the veteran workforce is at an all-time high**



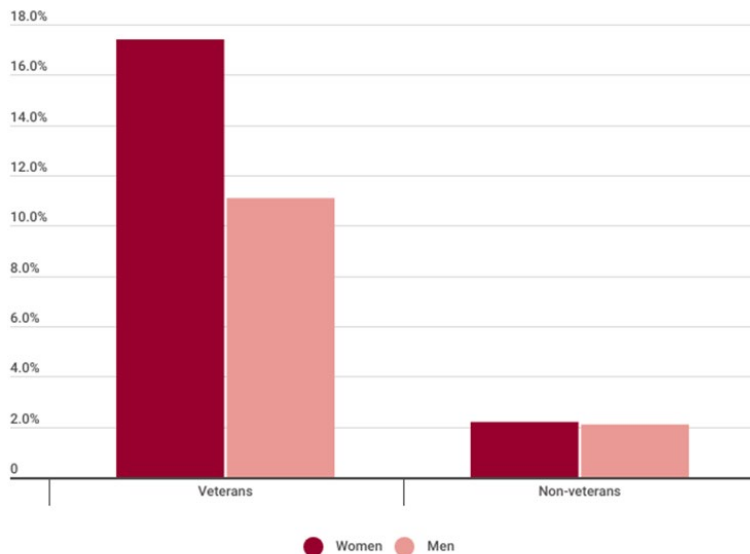
Source: National Partnership analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics data



## Trump’s and Musk’s efforts to slash federal jobs threaten women veterans

Today’s data reveal that nearly one-third of women veteran workers are employed across all levels of government – and more than half of these public servants work for the federal government. Women veterans are [more likely to work for the federal government than any other industry with the exception of education and health](#), making the federal government a tremendously important employer for this community. In fact, more than one out of every six working women veterans works for the federal government – a much higher rate than other groups:

## Women veterans are especially likely to work for the federal government



Source: National Partnership analysis of share of each workforce that is employed by the federal government based on Bureau of Labor Statistics Data.



Yet President Trump and Elon Musk have persisted in their attacks on federal workers who perform essential jobs in [communities across the country](#) to protect consumers, workers and our health, including processing Social Security benefits, supporting survivors of domestic violence, rooting out discrimination, and maintaining our national parks.

These attacks also have implications for the economy overall, both for sectors that are especially likely to receive federal funding, like [health care](#), and for federal contractors. [Some experts anticipate](#) that for every job cut from the federal

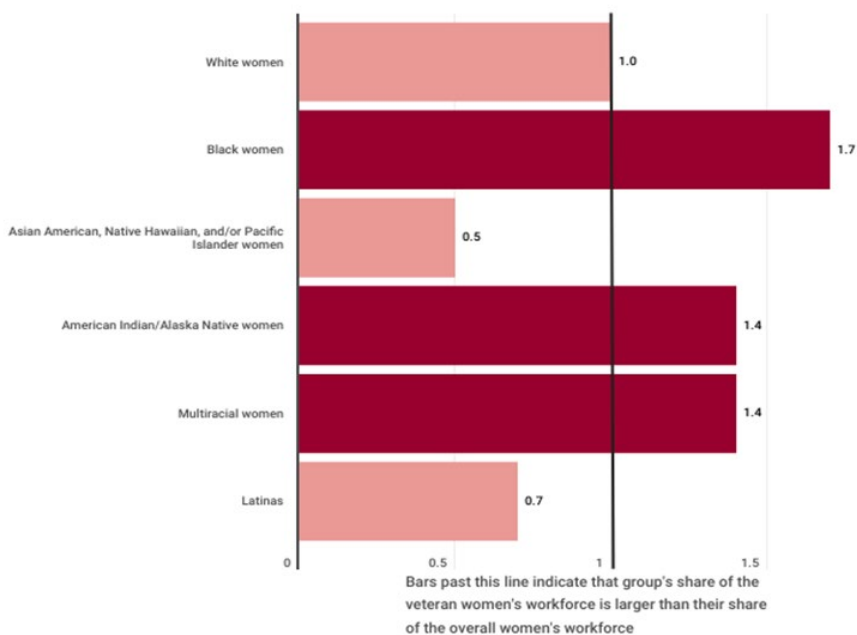
government, approximately two jobs will be cut from federal contractors who work in a [range of fields](#) from health care to national defense. Though limited data exist on the demographics of federal contractors, the high shares of women veterans in the federal workforce make it likely they are also well-represented among contractors, especially given federal contractor preferences for [some veteran-owned businesses](#) and the large share of federal contracts related to [defense](#). Women veterans who work for federal contractors are also harmed by the [rescission of Executive Order 11246](#), which protects federal workers from discrimination, and [deep cuts to the Office of Federal Contract Compliance](#), which enforces anti-discrimination laws for federal contractors, including protecting workers from discrimination based on their veteran status.

### Eliminating civil rights protections exposes women veterans to sexual harassment and discrimination – especially Black, Native and multiracial women veterans

Today's data show that women veteran workers are [more likely than their non-veteran counterparts](#) to work in mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction, as well as transportation and utilities – industries that [employ a large majority of men](#). Given the [higher rates of sexual harassment](#) women report in nontraditional industries, veteran women in these workplaces face an increased risk of harassment and discrimination due to Trump's [attacks on the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\)](#), which enforces workplace protections against harassment and discrimination.

The attacks on the EEOC, coupled with attacks on [diversity, equity and inclusion programs](#) may put Black, Native and multiracial women veterans at particular risk for discrimination and harassment. National Partnership research shows that [Black, Native](#) and multiracial women – who face a double bind of racial and sexual discrimination – account for especially large shares of the veteran women’s workforce compared to other groups of women. Black women account for 22 percent of veteran women workers – a figure 1.7 times higher than their 13-percent share of all women workers. American Indian/Alaska Native women’s share of the veteran women’s workforce is 1.4 times higher than their share of the overall women’s workforce, as is multiracial women’s.

## Veteran women workers are especially likely to be Black, Native or multiracial



Source: National Partnership analysis of American Community Survey, 2023. Racial groups do not include Latinas who are analyzed separately. Data include postal service workers. Share of the veteran women's workforce, compared to the overall women's workforce. Dark bars indicate larger representation in the veteran women's workforce.



## Threats to disabled workers are especially likely to impact women veterans

National Partnership analysis of today’s data show that [35 percent of veteran women](#) workers have a service-connected disability – a slightly higher rate than veteran workers overall due at least in part to the younger ages of women veterans (service-connected disabilities among veterans have [increased over time](#) and are more prevalent among those who have served more recently). And this captures just one aspect of disability among veterans, [many of whom](#) also have disabilities that are not connected to their service.

While disabled workers – and disabled women in particular – have made [significant strides towards equitable employment](#) in recent years, these gains are now under threat. President Trump has repeatedly maligned and [mocked disabled people](#). His administration is working to [rollback ADA protections](#) and to make workplaces, including the federal government (which employs an [especially large share of veterans](#) with service-

connected disabilities) [less accessible](#). He is also working to [undermine legal protections](#) for qualified disabled workers at federal contractors.

### **Veterans have higher rates of union coverage, making attacks on organized labor particularly harmful**

Veterans are especially likely to [hold union jobs](#), and our research shows that [women particularly](#) benefit from the higher wages and better benefits provided in union workplaces. Yet President Trump and [anti-union ally Elon Musk](#) have been attacking the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), which enforces laws related to collective bargaining and fair labor practices. Trump has [illegally attempted to fire Board member Gwynne Wilcox](#) (who was recently [reinstated](#)) and is working to curtail NLRB's power. These efforts are likely to hit women veterans' employment protections and benefits especially hard.

### **The Trump administration's attacks on veterans go beyond employment**

Veterans and service members are facing attacks from the Trump administration on multiple fronts. The contributions of veterans and service members of color and women – like the [heroics of Japanese Americans](#) who served while their families were incarcerated, the stories of [Navajo Code Talkers](#) who were instrumental in helping win WWII, and information about [notable women and people of color](#) buried at Arlington National Cemetery – are being erased from websites. Though [some pages have been restored](#), the Pentagon has defended its erasure of important historical figures and events as compliance with the Trump administration's attacks on diversity and inclusion. Health care – including reproductive care – and nutrition programs [essential for veterans](#) and their families are also widely under attack. Already, the Trump administration has [signaled](#) its plans to rescind a rule that [allows veterans to access abortion care](#) in cases of rape, incest, life or health endangerment of the pregnant person. And the contributions of active women service members, including [transwomen](#), have been consistently [denigrated](#) by Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth who is working to curtail or eliminate their full participation in our armed services, including [at the very highest levels](#).

Women veterans have proudly and faithfully served their country. But in just its first months, the Trump Administration has already demonstrated its disrespect and disregard for veterans, and women veterans in particular. As the administration continues its attacks on the federal workforce, civil rights protections and more, the growing number of women veteran workers will continue to see their gains threatened.

The authors are grateful to Jaclyn Dean, Mettabel Law, Anwasha Majumder, Brittany Williams and Gail Zuagar for their insights and support.