

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 9, 2025

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Hegseth:

We write to provide you with a new investigation conducted by our offices revealing the financial and intangible costs associated with providing military support to immigration enforcement. The investigation found that the Department of Defense (DoD) has obligated over \$2 billion in support of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and immigration enforcement in 2025, diverting it from the intended use – our national security and military servicemembers. This is a baffling waste of military resources considering the appropriation of \$170 billion to DHS to fund immigration enforcement earlier this year.¹ We are particularly concerned that DHS may not be reimbursing DoD for these funds. Allowing DHS to continue to pick DoD’s pockets puts our military readiness at risk.

You have refused to answer questions about how many American cities DoD will deploy troops to, how DoD assesses whether these missions distract from core missions and jeopardize readiness, and whether there is any limit at which DoD will acknowledge that these missions are clearly compromising our national security.² We are concerned that you are intentionally withholding this information because DoD is fully aware of how damaging this course of action is to our future defense. The president’s warning that he will expand operations to additional American cities as a “training ground for our military”³ will cause the costs to DoD to skyrocket, while further harming our servicemembers and their credibility with the American public.

During your confirmation hearing you said “the readiness of the troops and their families -- will be our only focus.”⁴ As the attached report details, DoD’s unprecedented redirection of resources to immigration enforcement is distracting troops from their usual duties and diverting funds from training programs, barracks repairs, necessary upgrades for elementary schools for children of

¹ Letter from Senators Christopher A. Coons and Jack Reed and Representatives Betty McCollum and Adam Smith to Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, July 29, 2025, https://www.coons.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/four-corners_on_dod_letter.pdf.

² Senate Armed Services Committee, “To Receive Testimony on the Department of Defense Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2026 and the Future Years Defense Program,” June 18, 2025, pp. 82-86, <https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/6182025fulltranscript.pdf>.

³ Associated Press, “Trump calls for using US cities as a ‘training ground’ for military in unusual speech to generals,” Ben Finley, Konstantin Toropin, and Evan Vucci, September 30, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/trump-hegseth-generals-meeting-military-pentagon-0ecdcb8877e24329cfa0fc1e851ebd2>.

⁴ Senate Armed Services Committee, “To Conduct a Confirmation Hearing on the Expected Nomination of Mr. Peter B. Hegseth to be Secretary of Defense,” January 14, 2025, p. 30, https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/01-14-25_nom-transcript.pdf.

servicemembers, and more.⁵ There are reports that the deployments in support of DHS are hurting morale,⁶ and there are concerns about how this will impact recruitment and retention.⁷ Similar deployments during the first Trump administration led to higher instances of alcohol and drug abuse amongst servicemembers assigned to these missions⁸ and potentially contributed to several tragic suicides.⁹

Your predecessor put a stop to similar operations when it became clear “that continued support for the mission would negatively affect military readiness and morale.”¹⁰ We urge you to uphold the commitment you made to the Senate during your confirmation process and stop using the military for these political stunts.

Given our national security concerns, we request that you immediately and publicly release a copy of the spend plan for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 reconciliation funds, which was already provided to the Senate Armed Services Committee. Additionally, we request that you respond to the following questions in writing by December 19, 2025:

1. How is DoD assessing whether these operations impact military readiness?
 - a. Has DoD conducted an analysis of how the diversion of funds, troops, and resources is impacting readiness?
 - i. Has DoD conducted an analysis of how the diversion of funds, troops, and resources is impacting strategic readiness?
 - ii. Has DoD conducted an analysis of how the diversion of funds, troops, and resources is impacting tactical readiness?
 - b. How does DoD assess the unit-level readiness impacts of assigning units to immigration enforcement, including but not limited to border operations?
 - c. What training programs have been cancelled, delayed, or disrupted as a result of DoD support to immigration enforcement?
2. How does DoD determine which units should support immigration enforcement, including but not limited to border operations?
3. How many troops are currently supporting immigration enforcement functions? Please include figures for Active Duty, Reserves, and National Guard forces.

⁵ Letter from the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer to Chairman John Boozman, May 28, 2025, https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/execution/reprogramming/fy2025/milcon/25-07_MC_Emergency_Military_Construction_on_the_Barry_M_Goldwater_Range.pdf.

⁶ Los Angeles Times, “Veterans’ advocates warn of low morale amid L.A. deployment: ‘This is not what we signed up for,’” Hailey Branson-Potts and Phi Do, June 24, 2025, <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-06-24/veteran-advocates-low-morale-l-a-deployment>.

⁷ New York Times, “Trump Is Expanding the National Guard’s Role. Some Former Generals Worry,” Chris Hippensteel, September 21, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/09/21/us/national-guard-crime-washington-cities.html>.

⁸ Army Times, “Death, drugs and a disbanded unit: How the Guard’s Mexico border mission fell apart,” Davis Winkie, December 8, 2021, <https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2021/12/08/death-drugs-and-a-disbanded-unit-how-the-guards-mexico-border-mission-fell-apart/>.

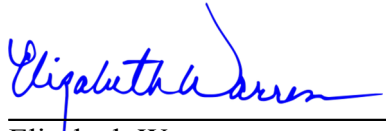
⁹ Texas Standard, “At least 17 Texas National Guardsman have died patrolling the southern border, including several suicides,” Gabriella Alcorta Solorio, December 9, 2024, <https://www.texasstandard.org/stories/texas-national-guard-operation-lone-star-soldier-deaths-suicides/>.

¹⁰ Government Accountability Office, “Southwest Border Security: Actions Are Needed to Address the Cost and Readiness Implications of Continued DOD Support to U.S. Customs and Border Protection,” February 2021, p. 27, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/720/712748.pdf>.

- a. How many troops are currently deployed to the border?
 - b. How many troops are currently deployed within American communities? Please include figures by location.
 - c. How many troops are currently supporting the transportation of detained immigrants?
 - d. How many troops are currently supporting the detention of noncitizens? Please include figures by location.
 - e. How many troops are supporting immigration raids and other immigration enforcement field operations?
4. How many DoD civilians are supporting immigration enforcement? Please include figures of DoD civilian detailees, their home offices, offices where they have been assigned, and length of detail.
 5. How many DoD contractors have been assigned to support immigration enforcement? Please include figures of DoD contractors, their original offices, offices where they have been assigned, and length of assignment.
 6. What is the long-term plan for border deployments?
 - a. How long are the deployment rotations at the border expected to last?
 - b. Which units are scheduled to replace the units currently deployed to the border and when are replacements scheduled to occur?
 - c. Does the DoD intend to permanently reorient the military toward border enforcement operations?
 7. What is the long-term plan for domestic deployments to American communities?
 - a. How does DoD determine the duration of deployments to American communities?
 - b. For which of the current deployments within American communities have DoD personnel been instructed to perform immigration-related functions, including protecting Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facilities?
 - c. Does DoD intend to permanently reorient the military toward domestic immigration enforcement in American communities?
 8. How much DoD spending in FY 2025 was related to immigration enforcement and border operations?
 - a. How much of that spending was reimbursable?
 - b. To date, how much has DHS reimbursed?
 - c. Are the DoD attorneys serving as temporary immigration judges detailed on a reimbursable basis as contemplated by the Department of Justice (DOJ) slip opinion issued on October 23, 2025?¹¹
 - d. Please provide copies of any memoranda of understanding (MOU) or memoranda of agreement (MOA) between DoD and DHS, to include any agreements with ICE and Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

Sincerely,

¹¹ Department of Justice, Office of Legal Counsel, “Detailing Attorneys to the Department of Justice to Serve as Immigration Judges and Special Assistant United States Attorneys,” memorandum, October 23, 2025, <https://www.justice.gov/olc/media/1417471/dl>.



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



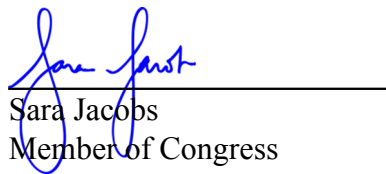
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator




Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



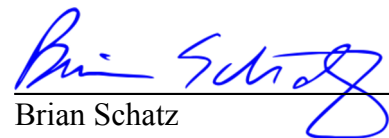
Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



Jeffrey A. Merkley
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Alex Padilla
United States Senator



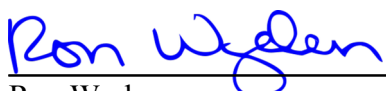
Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator