

January 6, 2025

Mr. Pete Hegseth
Secretary-Designate, U.S. Department of Defense
Trump-Vance Transition Team
P.O. Box 509
Arlington, VA 22216

Dear Mr. Hegseth:

Congratulations on your nomination to serve as the next Secretary of the Department of Defense (DoD or ‘the Department’). I look forward to your upcoming testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee.

The Secretary of Defense is responsible for serving as head of DoD, with civilian authority over all matters related to the nation’s Armed Forces.¹ The Secretary will oversee an annual budget of nearly \$850 billion² and an organization of nearly 3.4 million personnel, including over 2.5 million servicemembers and almost 900,000 civilian employees.³

I have serious concerns about your qualifications to serve in this role given your past history, including mismanagement of two non-profit organizations you ran, accusations of sexual assault and drinking problems, your blatant disregard for the contributions of female servicemembers, support for war crimes and torture, threats to politicize the military, advocating for ‘war’ against political enemies, threats to undermine DoD readiness and diversity, and contempt for veterans receiving benefits they earned.

In the letter below, I provide additional detail on these concerns and a series of questions about them. I request that you come to your Armed Services Committee nomination hearing prepared to answer these questions, and that you provide written answers no later than January 10, 2025.

¹ 10 U.S.C. 113.

² U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, “Summary of the Fiscal Year 2025 National Defense Authorization Act,” December 18, 2024, p. 1, <https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/download/fy25-ndaa-conference-executive-summary>.

³ Military OneSource, “2023 Demographics,” Chapter 1: Total Military Force, <https://demographics.militaryonesource.mil/chapter-1-total-military-force>.

Your Record of Organizational Mismanagement

Your record of gross mismanagement of organizations you previously led raises alarm about your ability to manage a department with a budget of almost \$850 billion,⁴ which accounts for over half of requested discretionary federal spending.⁵ As the Secretary of Defense, you will be charged with overseeing a total of almost 3.4 million personnel, including over 2.5 million servicemembers and nearly 900,000 civilian employees.⁶ You will also have to manage a requested acquisition budget of \$311 billion,⁷ which includes the weapons systems acquisition programs that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) continues to include on its high risk list of “government operations with vulnerabilities to fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement, or in need of transformation.”⁸ DoD has never passed a clean audit – failing to pass one in the seven occasions since 2018 that it has tried to be audited⁹ – and you will be responsible for addressing the DoD Inspector General’s (DoD IG) findings of material weakness, significant deficiencies, and instances of noncompliance that it identified in the auditors’ review of \$4.1 trillion in assets in FY 2024.¹⁰ You will also need to guide DoD to address many management challenges identified by the DoD IG and the GAO, including “Improving DoD Financial Management and Budgeting,” “Protecting the Health and Wellness of Service Members and Their Families,” “Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce,”¹¹ and “Transforming DoD Program Management.”¹²

But according to press reports, you were “forced to step down by both of the two nonprofit advocacy groups that [you] ran—Veterans for Freedom [VFF] and Concerned Veterans for America [CVA] —in the face of serious allegations of financial mismanagement, sexual

⁴ U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, “Summary of the Fiscal Year 2025 National Defense Authorization Act,” December 18, 2024, p. 1, <https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/download/fy25-ndaa-conference-executive-summary>.

⁵ Office of Management and Budget, “Budget of the U.S. Government: Fiscal Year 2025,” pp. 169-171, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/budget_fy2025.pdf; Fiscal Data, “How much has the U.S. government spent this year?” <https://fiscaldata.treasury.gov/americas-finance-guide/federal-spending/>.

⁶ Military OneSource, “2023 Demographics,” Chapter 1: Total Military Force, <https://demographics.militaryonesource.mil/chapter-1-total-military-force>.

⁷ Congressional Budget Office, “Long-Term Implications of the 2025 Future Years Defense Program,” November 2024, <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/61017>.

⁸ Government Accountability Office, “High-Risk Series: Efforts Made to Achieve Progress Need to Be Maintained and Expanded to Fully Address All Areas,” April 2023, pp. i-ii, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-23-106203.pdf>.

⁹ Reuters, “Pentagon fails its first-ever audit, official says,” Idrees Ali and Mike Stone, November 15, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/world/pentagon-fails-its-first-ever-audit-official-says-idUSKCN1NK2QQ/>; Breaking Defense, “Pentagon fails 7th audit in a row, eyes passing grade by 2028,” Ashley Roque, November 15, 2024, <https://breakingdefense.com/2024/11/pentagon-fails-7th-audit-in-a-row-eyes-passing-grade-by-2028/>.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Defense Office of Inspector General, “Press Release: DoD FY 2024 Agency Financial Report, including the FY 2024 and FY 2023 Agency-Wide Financial Statements,” November 15, 2024, <https://www.dodig.mil/In-the-Spotlight/Article/3965841/press-release-dod-fy-2024-agency-financial-report-including-the-fy-2024-and-fy/>.

¹¹ U.S. Department of Defense Office of Inspector General, “Fiscal Year 2024 Top DOD Management and Performance Challenges,” November 13, 2023, pp. 1-2, <https://media.defense.gov/2023/Nov/15/2003341326/-1/-1/1/TOP%20DOD%20MANAGEMENT%20AND%20PERFORMANCE%20CHALLENGES%20FY2024.PDF>.

¹² Government Accountability Office, “High-Risk Series: Efforts Made to Achieve Progress Need to Be Maintained and Expanded to Fully Address All Areas,” April 2023, Highlights p. ii, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-23-106203.pdf>.

impropriety, and personal misconduct.”¹³ Under your leadership at VFF, the organization “soon ran up enormous debt, and financial records indicate that, by the end of 2008, it was unable to pay its creditors.”¹⁴ The primary donors of the VFF even “became concerned that their money was being wasted on inappropriate expenses; there were rumors of parties that ‘could politely be called trysts.’”¹⁵

Your mismanagement of the VFF finances “grew so dire that the group’s donors hatched a plan to take control away from [you]” after hiring a forensic accountant to review the organization’s finances, which the donors’ representatives found “appalling.”¹⁶ In January 2009, you sent a letter yourself “to the donors admitting that, as of that day, the group had less than a thousand dollars in the bank and \$434,833 in unpaid bills.”¹⁷ You also had racked up “credit-card debts of as much as seventy-five thousand dollars” through the group.¹⁸ You “took full responsibility for the mess, but added that, unless the donors gave [you] more funds, V.F.F. would have to file for bankruptcy and close down.”¹⁹ The donors arranged to “castrate” you by merging VFF with another organization to take over most of its management.²⁰ A Republican strategist who worked at VFF between 2008 and 2009 noted the VFF was a very small organization, “And he couldn’t do that properly—I don’t know how he’s going to run an organization with an eight-hundred-and-fifty-seven-billion-dollar budget and three million individuals.”²¹

These are not the only reports of your mismanagement, wasteful spending, and inappropriate behavior. While executive director of CVA, you hired and paid \$108,000 to your brother, Phillip, “who had no professional experience,” for a media relations position.²² Although a trustee for CVA has said you voluntarily resigned,²³ others affiliated with CVA have pointed to more serious concerns about your leadership driving your departure.²⁴ In 2012, you helped launch the political action committee, MinnesotaPAC (MN PAC), “which was noted for spending one-third of its \$15,000 in funds on Christmas parties for families and friends.”²⁵ The PAC ultimately

¹³ The New Yorker, “Pete Hegseth’s Secret History,” Jane Mayer, December 1, 2024, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/pete-hegseths-secret-history>.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ *Id.*

²² APM Reports, “Words and deeds out of alignment for potential Cabinet appointment and Fox News personality,” Tom Scheck, March 27, 2018, <https://www.apmreports.org/story/2018/03/27/pete-hegseth-potential-cabinet-appointment>.

²³ New York Post, “Hegseth left veterans group post voluntarily, wasn’t ousted over drinking, misconduct: Trustee letter,” Josh Christenson and Diana Glebova, December 4, 2024, <https://nypost.com/2024/12/04/us-news/trustee-denied-8-years-ago-that-defense-secretary-pick-pete-hegseth-was-ousted-from-veterans-group-over-drinking-misconduct/>.

²⁴ CBS News, “Hegseth signed NDA, received six figure severance payment after leaving veterans’ group, sources say,” James LaPorta and Rhona Tarrant, December 5, 2024, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/pete-hegseth-signed-nda-received-six-figure-payment-after-leaving-concerned-veterans-for-america/>.

²⁵ Defense One, “Trump taps Fox host Pete Hegseth to be defense secretary,” Bradley Peniston, November 12, 2024, <https://www.defenseone.com/policy/2024/11/trump-taps-fox-host-pete-hegseth-be-defense-secretary/400999/>;

“spent less than half [of its funds] on behalf of candidates.”²⁶ Press reports also indicate that you had affairs with colleagues at VFF and Fox News.²⁷

Given that so many of your former colleagues have raised concerns about your management ability, behavior, and integrity throughout your career, it is unclear how you would be able to oversee and manage an agency entrusted with protecting our national security. Additionally, if you grossly mismanage the Department like you did with the VFF, the national security and taxpayer cost implications would be catastrophic.

I, therefore, request answers to the following questions:

1. If confirmed as Secretary of Defense, what is your strategy to address the significant management challenges identified by the DoD IG and the GAO?
2. What expenses did you pay for at VFF that accounted for the unpaid bills and credit card debts that you admitted to the donors as being responsible for? Were you asked to refund the organization for any of these expenses? If so, did you refund them?
3. What was the total credit card debt that VFF racked up during your time in its leadership?
4. What were the circumstances under which you resigned from CVA? Were you asked or pressured to resign, and if so, for what reasons?
5. Will you commit to not using Department resources for the personal benefit of yourself, or any of your family members or friends?

Reports of Excessive Drinking

There have been at least 11 separate incidents in which you have been described as drinking excessively or inappropriately in public, in addition to reports from former and current Fox colleagues that “on more than a dozen occasions...they smelled alcohol on [you] before [you] went on air.”²⁸ At any moment, the Secretary of Defense can be called upon to provide critical

MPRNews, “Former GOP Senate candidate launches PAC,” Mark Zdechlik, September 10, 2012, <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2012/09/10/former-gop-senate-candidate-launches-pac>.

²⁶ APM Reports, “Words and deeds out of alignment for potential Cabinet appointment and Fox News personality,” Tom Scheck, March 27, 2018, <https://www.apmreports.org/story/2018/03/27/pete-hegseth-potential-cabinet-appointment>.

²⁷ Vanity Fair, “The Storybook Start—and Bitter End—of Pete Hegseth’s First Marriage,” Gabriel Sherman, December 3, 2024, <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/story/pete-hegseth-first-marriage>.

²⁸ The New Yorker, “Pete Hegseth’s Secret History,” Jane Mayer, December 1, 2024, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/pete-hegseths-secret-history>; Washington Post, “Hegseth’s history with alcohol shadows Pentagon selection,” Michael Kranish, Dan Lamothe, Sarah Ellison and John Hudson, December 4, 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/12/04/pete-hegseth-drinking-defense-secretary-nomination/>; Rolling Stone, “Everything We Know About The Alcohol Abuse Allegations Against Pete Hegseth,” Nikki McCann Ramirez, December 5, 2024, <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/pete-hegseth-alcohol-abuse-allegations-1235193884/>; NBC News, “Pete Hegseth's drinking worried colleagues at Fox News, sources tell NBC News,” Chloe Melas, Courtney Kube, and Sarah Fitzpatrick, December 3, 2024,

national security advice to the President. But you have been repeatedly accused of exhibiting a pattern of alcohol abuse. While I believe we should support individuals with substance use disorders, we cannot have a Secretary of Defense, charged with making essential and critical national security decisions involving life and death, who is also struggling with alcohol abuse.

According to NBC News' conversations with 10 current and former Fox employees, you "drank in ways that concerned [your] colleagues at Fox News."²⁹ One of these sources said that "they smelled alcohol on [you] as recently as last month [November 2024] and heard [you] complain about being hungover this fall."³⁰ One of these former Fox employees stated that, "He should not be secretary of defense. His drinking should be disqualifying" and another said, "For the sake of national security, I really hope he has stopped drinking."³¹ One current and two former employees described feeling "like they needed to 'babysit' [you] because of [your] drinking and late nights," describing how, "We'd have to call him to make sure he didn't oversleep because we knew he'd be out partying the night before."³²

A whistleblower report from your time as president of CVA from 2013 to 2016 also details a disturbing pattern of excessive drinking.³³ This report, compiled by multiple former employees, "describes [you] as being repeatedly intoxicated while acting in [your] official capacity—to the point of needing to be carried out of the organization's events."³⁴ In one professional event, you were described as "totally sloshed" and needing to be carried to your room because "[you were] so intoxicated."³⁵ In yet another incident, you "'passed out' in the back of a party bus, then urinated in front of a hotel where C.V.A.'s team was staying."³⁶ You were "completely drunk in a public place" following an event in Cleveland and "several high profile people" at the event "were very disappointed to see this kind of public behavior."³⁷ Another former CVA employee submitted a separate letter of complaint in which they described you as "drunkenly chanting 'Kill All Muslims! Kill All Muslims!'" at a bar while on an official tour through Ohio for the CVA.³⁸

While you have pledged not to drink if confirmed,³⁹ your past violation of similar policies raises serious concerns about your ability to keep your promise. For example, CVA instituted a "no alcohol" policy at events in October 2014, but you and another manager lifted the policy "the next month" during a get-out-the-vote field operation in North Carolina, and the evening before

<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/pete-hegseths-drinking-worried-colleagues-fox-news-sources-tell-nbc-ne-rcna181471>.

²⁹ NBC News, "Pete Hegseth's drinking worried colleagues at Fox News, sources tell NBC News," Chloe Melas, Courtney Kube, and Sarah Fitzpatrick, December 3, 2024, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/pete-hegseths-drinking-worried-colleagues-fox-news-sources-tell-nbc-ne-rcna181471>.

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ *Id.*

³² *Id.*

³³ The New Yorker, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," Jane Mayer, December 1, 2024,

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/pete-hegseths-secret-history>.

³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ *Id.*

³⁸ *Id.*

³⁹ USA Today, "Pete Hegseth vows he won't drink 'a drop of alcohol' if confirmed as defense secretary," Joey Garrison, December 5, 2024, <https://www.yahoo.com/news/pete-hegseth-vows-wont-drink-232421444.html>.

the election, you were “so inebriated by 1 A.M. that a staffer who had driven [you] to [your] hotel...asked for assistance to get [you] to [your] room.”⁴⁰ The report described how, “Everyone who saw this was disgusted and in shock that the head of the team was that intoxicated.”⁴¹ The whistleblower complaint also described a CVA associate having to “intervene with security to prevent [you] from getting thrown out” at a strip club after you were “so drunk [you] tried to get on the stage and dance with the strippers.”⁴² Your pattern of behavior was so frequent that it “was embarrassing in front of the team, but not surprising; people have simply come to expect [you] to get drunk at social events.”⁴³ One whistleblower described how, “I’ve seen him drunk so many times. I’ve seen him dragged away not a few times but *multiple* times. To have him at the Pentagon would be scary.”⁴⁴ Although you claim, “I’ve never had a drinking problem” and that no one has ever approached you to say that you should look at seeking help for drinking, there is a clear pattern of behavior that indicates otherwise.⁴⁵ Additionally, in your book *American Crusade*, you did admit to excessive drinking when you wrote, “There is a reason many soldiers who come back from combat become depressed. I did. I drank way too much and didn’t want to leave the couch.”⁴⁶

In 1989, when President George H.W. Bush nominated John Tower to become Secretary of Defense, an FBI investigation revealed significant allegations that Mr. Tower was “a drunk and a womanizer.”⁴⁷ In response to these concerns, Mr. Tower pledged not to drink any alcoholic beverages during his tenure as Secretary of Defense and to resign if he did so.⁴⁸ The Senate ultimately determined that the risks of Mr. Tower’s nomination were too high and rejected his nomination.⁴⁹

A Secretary of Defense must exercise clear judgment and be ready to be called upon at any time, and a Secretary who struggles with excessive and inappropriate drinking undermines our national security. Servicemembers who drink while on duty face “serious potential consequences, including loss of benefits and a dishonorable discharge in rare, egregious cases where someone is injured.”⁵⁰ As a civilian, you are not subject to these same consequences, but you set an example

⁴⁰ The New Yorker, “Pete Hegseth’s Secret History,” Jane Mayer, December 1, 2024, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/pete-hegseths-secret-history>.

⁴¹ *Id.*

⁴² *Id.*

⁴³ *Id.*

⁴⁴ *Id.*

⁴⁵ Washington Post, “Hegseth’s history with alcohol shadows Pentagon selection,” Michael Kranish, Dan Lamothe, Sarah Ellison and John Hudson, December 4, 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/12/04/pete-hegseth-drinking-defense-secretary-nomination/>.

⁴⁶ Pete Hegseth, *American Crusade*, Center Street, 2020, p. 301.

⁴⁷ Politico, “Senate fails to confirm John Tower, March 9, 1989,” March 9, 2012, Andrew Glass, <https://www.politico.com/story/2012/03/this-day-in-politics-073796>.

⁴⁸ Chicago Tribune, “Tower: If confirmed, I won’t have a drink,” Elaine S. Povich, February 27, 1989, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/1989/02/27/tower-if-confirmed-i-wont-have-a-drink/>.

⁴⁹ TIME, “This Is What Happened Last Time a Cabinet Nomination Was Rejected,” Elizabeth King, February 3, 2017, <https://time.com/4653593/cabinet-rejection-john-tower/>.

⁵⁰ Washington Post, “Hegseth’s history with alcohol shadows Pentagon selection,” Michael Kranish, Dan Lamothe, Sarah Ellison and John Hudson, December 4, 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/12/04/pete-hegseth-drinking-defense-secretary-nomination/>.

from the very top of the organization and are charged with making the life-and-death decisions with which a Secretary of Defense is tasked.

Due to these concerning reports, I request answers to the following questions:

1. A report prepared by CVA staff “describes [you] as being repeatedly intoxicated while acting in [your] official capacity—to the point of needing to be carried out of the organization’s events.”⁵¹ In one professional event you were described as “totally sloshed” and needing to be carried to your room because “[you were] so intoxicated.”⁵² In yet another incident, you “‘passed out’ in the back of a party bus, then urinated in front of a hotel where C.V.A.’s team was staying.”⁵³ Are any of these allegations truthful? If so, do you have any explanation for your behavior?
2. You and another colleague disregarded CVA’s policy of “no alcohol” at events within a month of the policy being put in place by lifting it during a get-out-the-vote field operation in North Carolina in 2014.⁵⁴ The evening before the election, you were “so inebriated by 1 A.M. that a staffer who had driven [you] to [your] hotel...asked for assistance to get [you] to [your] room.”⁵⁵ Why did you lift this policy?
3. It is my understanding you have pledged not to drink alcohol if confirmed. If you break this pledge, will you promise to resign immediately as Secretary of Defense?
4. Have you ever received any treatment for substance abuse, including alcohol abuse? If so, please provide details on the treatment you have received.
5. Have you ever been told by any individual that you should seek or consider seeking treatment for substance abuse, including alcohol abuse?

Allegations of Sexual Assault and Harassment

In December 2024, I sent a letter with several Senators asking the President-elect Trump transition team about your views on women serving in combat roles and allegations against you of sexual assault and harassment.⁵⁶ This includes allegations described in a memo the Trump transition team received that you “raped [a] then-30-year-old conservative group staffer [“Jane

⁵¹ The New Yorker, “Pete Hegseth’s Secret History,” Jane Mayer, December 1, 2024, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/pete-hegseths-secret-history>.

⁵² *Id.*

⁵³ *Id.*

⁵⁴ *Id.*

⁵⁵ *Id.*

⁵⁶ Office of Senator Elizabeth Warren, “Warren, Senators Question Hegseth Nomination, His Disqualifying Views on Women in the Military, Allegations of Sexual Assault,” press release, December 17, 2024, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/warren-senators-question-hegseth-nomination-his-disqualifying-views-on-women-in-the-military-allegations-of-sexual-assault>.

Doe”] in [your] room after drinking at a hotel bar”⁵⁷ on October 8, 2017.⁵⁸ They also include reports that while you were president of CVA, you and other members of your management team “sexually pursued the organization’s female staffers, whom [you] divided into two groups—the ‘party girls’ and the ‘not party girls.’”⁵⁹ You and your team also “ignored serious accusations of impropriety, including an allegation made by a female employee that another employee on [your] staff had attempted to sexually assault her” at a strip club.⁶⁰ One report stated that, “Fear of reprisal looms over every woman associated with the organization.”⁶¹ These allegations and reporting that indicates you hid this information from the Trump transition team raise serious questions about your character and integrity.

The DoD continues to report high levels of sexual assaults and sexual harassment, which are likely even higher given systemic underreporting.⁶² The most recent Pentagon statistics found that about 29,000 active-duty troops – which includes 6.8 percent of female active-duty servicemembers and 1.3 percent of male active-duty servicemembers – experienced unwanted sexual contact in 2023.⁶³ A Brown University study estimates that the actual rates are two to four times higher.⁶⁴ It is a solemn duty of the Secretary of Defense to protect its personnel and set a tone for respect. Your alleged past behaviors raise serious concerns about your ability to professionally and respectfully lead an agency entrusted with protecting Americans.

Given these deeply concerning allegations and reports, I request answers to the following questions:

1. How many times have you been accused of sexually harassing or sexually assaulting another individual? Provide a list of all the instances in which you have been accused of sexually harassing or sexually assaulting an individual and the behavior of which you were accused.

⁵⁷ Washington Post, “Defense pick Hegseth paid accuser but denies sexual assault, attorney says,” Michael Kranish, Josh Dawsey, and Jonathan O’Connell, November 16, 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/11/16/pete-hegseth-sexual-assault-accuser-paid/>.

⁵⁸ CNN, “Trump’s defense secretary nominee paid accuser but denies sexual assault, attorney says,” Kaanita Iyer, Zachary Cohen and Kaitlan Collins, November 17, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2024/11/17/politics/pete-hegseth-sexual-assault-settlement-agreement/index.html>.

⁵⁹ The New Yorker, “Pete Hegseth’s Secret History,” Jane Mayer, December 1, 2024, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/pete-hegseths-secret-history>.

⁶⁰ *Id.*

⁶¹ *Id.*

⁶² RAND Corporation, “Prevalence of Sexual Assault in the Military: Risk and Protective Factors, Data Sources, and Data Uses,” <https://www.rand.org/pubs/tools/TLA746-2/handbook/resources/data-on-sexual-assault-in-the-military.html>; NBC News, “U.S. military sexual assault rates 2 to 4 times higher than govt estimates, study says,” Phil Helsel and Courtney Kube, August 14, 2024, <https://www.nbcnews.com/investigations/us-military-sexual-assault-rates-2-4-higher-govt-estimates-study-says-rcna166490>.

⁶³ Military Times, “Military sexual assault totals down, but trust among women remains low,” Leo Shane III, May 16, 2024, <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2024/05/16/military-sexual-assault-totals-down-but-trust-among-women-remains-low/>.

⁶⁴ NBC News, “U.S. military sexual assault rates 2 to 4 times higher than govt estimates, study says,” Phil Helsel and Courtney Kube, August 14, 2024, <https://www.nbcnews.com/investigations/us-military-sexual-assault-rates-2-4-higher-govt-estimates-study-says-rcna166490>.

2. Did you report the accusation that you had raped “Jane Doe”⁶⁵ to the Trump transition team before you were announced as the Secretary of Defense nominee?
3. Why did you ask “Jane Doe” to sign a non-disclosure agreement after she accused you of raping her in October 2017?⁶⁶
 - a. Have you requested, or has anyone requested on your behalf, anyone else sign a non-disclosure agreement regarding your conduct?
 - b. Will you voluntarily release any individual from non-disclosure agreements that they have with you before your nomination hearing?
4. Your attorney has threatened to sue “Jane Doe.”⁶⁷ What message do you think this sends to women who are serving or will serve in the military and are afraid to report sexual harassment or assault?
5. Did you at any time during your tenure at CVA classify the women at the organization as “the ‘party girls’ and the ‘not party girls.’”⁶⁸ Were you aware of others using this classification?
6. If confirmed as Secretary of Defense, what is your strategy to reduce sexual harassment and sexual assault in the military?

Opposition to Women in the Military

You have repeatedly disparaged the vital role that women play in the military. Women are critical to our national security and comprise nearly 18 percent of active-duty servicemembers.⁶⁹ They serve a variety of critical national security roles, including “infantry, cavalry, armor and field artillery roles”⁷⁰ and as operational and intelligence experts.⁷¹ There are at least 300,000 women who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan since 9/11 and women have played critical

⁶⁵ Washington Post, “Defense pick Hegseth paid accuser but denies sexual assault, attorney says,” Michael Kranish, Josh Dawsey, and Jonathan O’Connell, November 16, 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/11/16/pete-hegseth-sexual-assault-accuser-paid/>.

⁶⁶ *Id.*

⁶⁷ ABC News, “Hegseth's attorney threatens to sue sex assault accuser if she repeats 'false' claims and he's not confirmed,” Oren Oppenheim, Peter Charalambous, and Ivan Pereira, December 6, 2024, <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/hegseths-attorney-threatens-sue-sex-assault-accuser-repeats/story?id=116531786>.

⁶⁸ The New Yorker, “Pete Hegseth’s Secret History,” Jane Mayer, December 1, 2024, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/pete-hegseths-secret-history>.

⁶⁹ U.S. Department of Defense, “2023 Demographics: Profile of the Military Community,” December 16, 2024, pp. 6 and 18, <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2023-demographics-report.pdf>.

⁷⁰ Military.com, “Thousands of Women Serve in Combat Roles. Pentagon Nominee Hegseth Says They Shouldn’t,” Steven Beynon, Drew F. Lawrence, and Konstantin Toropin, November 18, 2024, <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2024/11/18/thousands-of-women-serve-combat-roles-pentagon-nominee-hegseth-says-they-shouldnt.html>.

⁷¹ Military.com, “‘We Need You’: Defense Secretary Stands Up for Women in Combat Jobs amid Hegseth Nomination,” Konstantin Toropin, November 20, 2024, <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2024/11/20/we-need-you-defense-secretary-stands-women-combat-jobs-amid-hegseth-nomination.html>.

roles in supporting our military throughout our nation’s history.⁷² Experts agree that the military needs to recruit more women in order to address the recruiting crisis and build the force that we need to protect our nation.⁷³

You have shown blatant disrespect to women in uniform, writing in *The War on Warriors* that, “Dads push us to take risks. Moms put the training wheels on our bikes. We need moms. *But not in the military, especially not in combat units.*”⁷⁴ You have argued that men are “physically superior,”⁷⁵ and while you have since said that you will accept female pilots, you stated that expanding combat roles to women “hasn’t made us more effective, hasn’t made us more lethal, has made fighting more complicated.”⁷⁶ You also argued that, “Men...are distracted by women.”⁷⁷ In 2015, you contended that, “[t]hrough don’t ask, don’t tell and women in the military and these standards, they’re going to inevitably start to erode standards because they want that one female special operator, that one female Green Beret, that one female Army Ranger, that one female Navy Seal, so they can put them on a recruiting poster and feel good about themselves – and [that] has nothing to do with national security.”⁷⁸ A friend of your first ex-wife, Meredith Schwarz, recalled discussing politics with you and how, “[w]e would argue about women’s reproductive rights. He had some regressive views on birth control. His position was basically, if you got pregnant it was your fault.”⁷⁹ According to reports, “[a]nother person close to [you] recalled [you] joking that women shouldn’t have the right to vote.”⁸⁰

DoD officials have emphasized the benefits of women in the military, with the Chief of Naval Operations, U.S. Navy Admiral Lisa Franchetti, pointing to how they bring the “critical thinking skills, that we need to be able to be the world’s most formidable fighting force, ready to deter, fight and win whenever the nation needs us to do so.”⁸¹ As Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin

⁷² USO, “Over 200 Years of Service: The History of Women in the U.S. Military,” Danielle DeSimone, February 28, 2023, <https://www.uso.org/stories/3005-over-200-years-of-service-the-history-of-women-in-the-us-military>.

⁷³ Military Times, “Experts, data point to women as best military recruiting pool,” Meghann Myers, January 26, 2023, <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2023/01/26/experts-data-point-to-women-as-best-military-recruiting-pool/>.

⁷⁴ Pete Hegseth, *The War on Warriors: Behind the Betrayal of the Men Who Keep Us Free*, Fox News Books, 2024, p. 66.

⁷⁵ *Id.*, p. 79.

⁷⁶ Washington Post, “Pete Hegseth has said exactly how he will shake up the Pentagon,” Missy Ryan, Dan Lamothe, John Hudson, and Alex Horton, November 13, 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/11/12/pete-hegseth-trump-defense-secretary/>.

⁷⁷ Pete Hegseth, *The War on Warriors: Behind the Betrayal of The Men Who Keep Us Free*, Fox News Books, 2024, p. 48.

⁷⁸ The Guardian, “Pete Hegseth decried out gay troops in US military as part of Marxist agenda,” Robert Tait, December 12, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/dec/12/pete-hegseth-military-comments>.

⁷⁹ Vanity Fair, “The Storybook Start—and Bitter End—of Pete Hegseth’s First Marriage,” Gabriel Sherman, December 3, 2024, https://www.vanityfair.com/news/story/pete-hegseth-first-marriage?srsltid=AfmBOoqzc1b_MvL8veMdwdBYYAqivlwWjK4Cs74lipTlebVIPslke2zD.

⁸⁰ *Id.*

⁸¹ U.S. Department of Defense, “Women Leaders Discuss Benefits of Military Service,” David Vergun, March 6, 2023, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3320600/women-leaders-discuss-benefits-of-military-service/>.

explained, “this isn’t 1950. It isn’t 1948. It is 2024. And any military that turns away tough, talented patriots – women or men – is just making itself weaker and smaller.”⁸²

Your rhetoric and behavior toward women would set a tone from the top of DoD that women are not welcome in the military, that their valuable contributions will not be recognized, and that sexual assault, sexual harassment, and other mistreatment of women is acceptable.

Given these concerns, I request answers to the following questions.

1. Can you explain what you meant by your statement that that we don’t need “moms” in the military?⁸³ Which women were you referring to in this statement?
2. Our military has been suffering from a recruiting crisis, and experts have confirmed that women are a critical component of solving that crisis and ensuring we have a ready force.⁸⁴ Do you agree with this assessment? If so, how do you plan to encourage women to join the military, if you are disparaging their service?
3. Do you think our military recruiting strategy should include seeking out women for combat roles? Will you pledge to allow women to be able to serve in combat, as they are allowed today, if you are confirmed as Secretary of Defense?
4. A friend of your first ex-wife, Meredith Schwarz, recalled discussing politics with you and how, “[w]e would argue about women’s reproductive rights. He had some regressive views on birth control. His position was basically, if you got pregnant it was your fault.”⁸⁵ Is this true, and if so, what are your views on birth control?
 - a. Do you believe single women should have access to birth control?
 - b. Do you believe married women should consult their spouse before accessing birth control?
 - c. Do you believe servicemembers should have access to birth control?
5. Do you support servicemembers having the right to make decisions regarding their reproductive healthcare?
 - a. If so, how will you support servicemembers having the right to do so if you are confirmed as Secretary of Defense?

⁸² CBS News, “Women in the military worry about Hegseth's views on women in combat,” James LaPorta, December 13, 2024, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/women-military-hegseth-women-combat/>.

⁸³ Pete Hegseth, *The War on Warriors: Behind the Betrayal of the Men Who Keep Us Free*, Fox News Books, 2024, p. 66.

⁸⁴ Military Times, “Experts, data point to women as best military recruiting pool,” Meghann Myers, January 26, 2023, <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2023/01/26/experts-data-point-to-women-as-best-military-recruiting-pool/>.

⁸⁵ Vanity Fair, “The Storybook Start—and Bitter End—of Pete Hegseth’s First Marriage,” Gabriel Sherman, December 3, 2024, https://www.vanityfair.com/news/story/pete-hegseth-first-marriage?srsltid=AfmBOoqzc1b_MvL8veMdwdBYYAqivlwWjK4Cs74lipTlebVIPslke2zD.

6. Do you support servicemembers having the right to access reproductive health care, including the non-covered reproductive health care outlined in the 2023 DoD memorandum on “Administrative Absence for Non-Covered Reproductive Health Care?”⁸⁶
 - a. Do you support servicemembers having the right to request administrative absence to be able to access such care?⁸⁷
 - b. Do you support transportation and travel allowances being authorized when a servicemember or their dependent needs to access non-covered reproductive healthcare services not available within their permanent or temporary duty location or the last location that they were transported on government orders?⁸⁸
 - c. Do you support all the policies outlined in the 2023 DoD memorandum on “Administrative Absence for Non-Covered Reproductive Health Care?”⁸⁹ If not, how do you plan to change it, and how do you plan to ensure servicemembers and their dependents can fully access non-covered reproductive healthcare?

7. Do you support servicemembers having until up to 20 weeks of pregnancy to notify their commanders of their pregnancy status, with limited exceptions as under current DoD policy?⁹⁰

Threats to Politicize and Undermine the Military

The United States established an apolitical military from its founding, recognizing the value of a promotion system that is not tied to politics and its importance for maintaining public trust and the military’s legitimacy. Under DoD regulations, servicemembers must take steps to ensure they are upholding “this long-standing tradition that DoD remain apolitical.”⁹¹ For example, “active-duty personnel may not engage in partisan political activities” and servicemembers who are “on active duty may not campaign for a partisan candidate, engage in partisan fundraising activities,

⁸⁶ Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, “Administrative Absence for Non-Covered Reproductive Health Care,” February 16, 2023, <https://media.defense.gov/2023/Feb/16/2003163307/-1/-1/1/MEMORANDUM-ADMINISTRATIVE-ABSENCE-FOR-NON-COVERED-REPRODUCTIVE-HEALTH-CARE.PDF>.

⁸⁷ U.S. Department of Defense, “DoD Releases Policies to Ensure Access to Non-Covered Reproductive Health Care,” press release, February 16, 2023, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/article/3301006/dod-releases-policies-to-ensure-access-to-non-covered-reproductive-health-care/>.

⁸⁸ *Id.*

⁸⁹ Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, “Administrative Absence for Non-Covered Reproductive Health Care,” memorandum, February 16, 2023, <https://media.defense.gov/2023/Feb/16/2003163307/-1/-1/1/MEMORANDUM-ADMINISTRATIVE-ABSENCE-FOR-NON-COVERED-REPRODUCTIVE-HEALTH-CARE.PDF>.

⁹⁰ Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, “Changes to Command Notification of Pregnancy Policy,” February 16, 2023, <https://media.defense.gov/2023/Feb/16/2003163306/-1/-1/1/MEMORANDUM-CHANGES-TO-COMMAND-NOTIFICATION-OF-PREGNANCY-POLICY.PDF>.

⁹¹ U.S. Department of Defense, “Guidance on Political Activity and DoD Support,” 2020, p. 1, <https://dodsoco.ogc.osd.mil/Portals/102/Documents/Political%20Activities%20Docs/2020%20Political%20Activity%20Update%20v1.pdf?ver=2020-08-14-124805-053>.

serve as an officer of a partisan club or speak before a partisan gathering.”⁹² It has also broadly been this country’s principle that we do not hold uniformed military leaders responsible for policy decisions made by civilians.

You have made a series of comments that would amount to an unprecedented assault on military norms that could radically politicize the Defense Department. You criticized Joint Chiefs Chairman General Charles Q. Brown, the first African American Air Force chief of staff and second Black chairman of the Joint Chiefs,⁹³ when you argued that General Brown “built his generalship dutifully pursuing the radical positions of left-wing politicians, who in turn rewarded him with promotions.”⁹⁴ You wrote that, “With the Pentagon now run by, and fully staffed by, so-called ‘leaders’ like CQ Brown, we can assume that 17 percent of all black officers in the Air Force are simply promoted because of how they look—and not how they lead.”⁹⁵ While on a podcast, you argued that “[f]irst of all, you’ve got to fire the chairman of the Joint Chiefs” and that “[a]ny general that was involved, any general, admiral, whatever, that was involved in any of the DEI/woke s*** has got to go.”⁹⁶ You also complained about Admiral Lisa Franchetti, the first female Chief of Naval Operations being promoted, writing that, “...Biden shocked the world when he went with another inexperienced first, promoting Franchetti. If naval operations suffers [*sic*], at least we can hold our heads high. Because at least we have another *first!* The first female member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—hooray...Politics is all about optics instead of results. Naval operations being weakened won’t matter to anyone in the legacy media.”⁹⁷

Your views are especially alarming in the wake of reporting that President-elect Trump’s transition team is considering an executive order to create a board that would “purge” generals.⁹⁸ This draft executive order would establish a “warrior board” comprised of retired senior military personnel who would have the authority “to review three- and four-star officers and to recommend removals of any deemed unfit for leadership.”⁹⁹ This board “could undermine the idea that generals refrain from sharing their political views within the Pentagon” and “could also potentially prompt officers not to speak out against orders they believe are illegal.”¹⁰⁰ Purging

⁹² U.S. Department of Defense, “DOD civilians, service members must remain non-partisan, apolitical,” Jim Garamone, October 17, 2016, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/975910/dod-civilians-service-members-must-remain-non-partisan-apolitical/>.

⁹³ Washington Post, “Top general faces brewing storm after Trump’s Pentagon pick,” Missy Ryan, November 13, 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/11/13/trump-charles-q-brown-pete-hegseth-defense-secretary/>.

⁹⁴ Pete Hegseth, *The War on Warriors: Behind the Betrayal of The Men Who Keep Us Free*, Fox News Books, 2024, p. 214.

⁹⁵ *Id.*, p. 213.

⁹⁶ Politico, “‘Who the f--k is this guy?’: Defense world reacts to Trump’s surprise Pentagon pick,” Joe Gould, Robbie Gramer, Paul McLeary, Connor O’Brien, and Jack Detsch, November 12, 2024, <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/11/12/defense-world-reacts-to-trump-pick-pete-hegseth-00189221>.

⁹⁷ Pete Hegseth, *The War on Warriors: Behind the Betrayal of The Men Who Keep Us Free*, Fox News Books, 2024, p. 93.

⁹⁸ Wall Street Journal, “Trump Draft Executive Order Would Create Board to Purge Generals,” Vivian Salama, Nancy A. Youssef, Lara Seligman, November 12, 2024, <https://www.wsj.com/politics/national-security/trump-draft-executive-order-would-create-board-to-purge-generals-7ebaa606>.

⁹⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰⁰ *Id.*

top military leadership based on their political views would represent a direct threat to the norms and institutions that uphold the Defense Department and civil-military relations.

Anyone nominated to your position should know that civilians establish policies that are then carried out by the military. I am concerned by proposals to hold military leaders responsible for policy decisions made by civilian leaders. For example, the Trump Administration set the path for withdrawing from Afghanistan by establishing an agreement with the Taliban for a complete withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan by May 1, 2021,¹⁰¹ and the withdrawal was carried out by the Biden administration. Despite this, President-elect Trump has “said he would ask all generals involved in the [Afghanistan] withdrawal to resign by ‘noon on Inauguration Day.’”¹⁰² You have also personally called for “[f]ir[ing] any general who has carried water for Obama and Biden’s extraconstitutional and agenda-driven transformation of our military.”¹⁰³

Based on these reports, I request answers to the following questions:

1. Do you agree that it is essential that the military to remain an apolitical institution? If confirmed as Secretary of Defense, do you commit to ensuring that the military remains apolitical?
2. Please provide a list of military leaders that you will recommend or support the firing of for their involvement “in any of the DEI/woke s***”¹⁰⁴ if you are confirmed as Secretary of Defense. Please include your justification for doing so for each individual on this list.
3. Your comments about the Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Franchetti described her as another “inexperienced first” and implied that Naval operations would “suffer” under her watch when you sarcastically wrote that, “If naval operations suffer, at least we can hold our heads high. Because at least we have another first!”¹⁰⁵ Why did you make these comments? Do you have any evidence indicating that this has been the case?
4. Do you support President Trump’s proposal to create a board to review and purge three- and four-star officers?

¹⁰¹ NPR, “Trump's Deal To End War In Afghanistan Leaves Biden With 'A Terrible Situation,’” Terry Gross, March 4, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2021/03/04/973604904/trumps-deal-to-end-war-in-afghanistan-leaves-biden-with-a-terrible-situation>.

¹⁰² Wall Street Journal, “Trump Draft Executive Order Would Create Board to Purge Generals,” Vivian Salama, Nancy A. Youssef, Lara Seligman, November 12, 2024, <https://www.wsj.com/politics/national-security/trump-draft-executive-order-would-create-board-to-purge-generals-7ebaa606>.

¹⁰³ Pete Hegseth, *The War on Warriors: Behind the Betrayal of the Men Who Keep Us Free*, Fox News Books, 2024, p. 45.

¹⁰⁴ Politico, “‘Who the f--k is this guy?’: Defense world reacts to Trump’s surprise Pentagon pick,” Joe Gould, Robbie Gramer, Paul McLeary, Connor O’Brien, and Jack Detsch, November 12, 2024, <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/11/12/defense-world-reacts-to-trump-pick-pete-hegseth-00189221>.

¹⁰⁵ Pete Hegseth, *The War on Warriors: Behind the Betrayal of the Men Who Keep Us Free*, Fox News Books, 2024, p. 93.

- a. If so, what criteria would you use for any board to review three- and four-star officers to determine whether these officers are fit for leadership and for selecting who will be appointed to be the board?
5. Have you or do you plan to recommend the Trump administration remove specific officers? What is your justification for their removal, including your assessment of their character and leadership?
 6. Do you plan to recommend or support purging or demanding the resignation of generals who were part of the Afghanistan withdrawal?
 - a. If so, which servicemembers are you would you recommend or support purging or demanding resignations? What is your criteria for doing so?
 7. What do you think a servicemember or officer should do if they discover wrongdoing or are asked to follow orders that they believe to be illegal or in violation of the Constitution?
 8. What steps will you take to make clear that officers should report orders that they believe are illegal?

Support for War Crimes and Torture

The U.S. has a responsibility and moral imperative to follow and uphold international law. Doing so supports the legitimacy of U.S. military actions, helps gain support from allies, protect civilians caught in the crosshairs of war, and promotes broader international stability. DoD has determined that protecting civilians is “a strategic and a moral imperative” that is “fundamentally consistent with the effective, efficient, and decisive use of force in pursuit of U.S. national interests, and our efforts to mitigate and respond to civilian harm are a direct reflection of U.S. values.”¹⁰⁶

You have voiced opposition to the rules of war, including recently saying that you “told [your] platoon they could ignore directives limiting when they can shoot.”¹⁰⁷ You wrote that after receiving a briefing from a judge advocate general (JAG) on the rules of engagement in Iraq about when to engage an enemy holding an rocket-propelled grenade (RPG), you told your platoon, “I will not allow that nonsense to filter into your brains. Men, if you see an enemy who you believe is a threat, you engage and destroy the threat. That’s a bulls*** rule that’s going to get people killed.”¹⁰⁸ In *The War on Warriors*, you also argued that “Modern war-fighters fight

¹⁰⁶ Office of the Secretary of Defense, “Improving Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response,” January 27, 2022, <https://media.defense.gov/2022/Jan/27/2002928875/-1/-1/1/DEPARTMENT%20OF%20DEFENSE%20RELEASES%20MEMORANDUM%20ON%20IMPROVING%20CIVILIAN%20HARM%20MITIGATION%20AND%20RESPONSE.PDF>.

¹⁰⁷ AP News, “Trump Pentagon pick had been flagged by fellow service member as possible ‘Insider Threat,’” Tara Copp, Michelle R. Smith, and Jason Dearen, November 15, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/trump-defense-department-pentagon-hegseth-fox-news-8cd9f065e54a7cbbaceec8bae9261a6>.

¹⁰⁸ Pete Hegseth, *The War on Warriors: Behind the Betrayal of The Men Who Keep Us Free*, Fox News Books, 2024, pp. 162-163.

lawyers as much as we fight bad guys. Our enemies should get bullets, not attorneys.”¹⁰⁹ You repeatedly insulted Army lawyers by calling them “jagoffs,”¹¹⁰ and when complaining the JAG briefing your platoon received in Iraq, you wrote that “[n]eedless to say, no infantrymen like Army lawyers—which is why JAG officers are often not so affectionately known as ‘jagoffs.’”¹¹¹

You have also “argue[d] at length that US forces should ignore the Geneva conventions and other elements of the international law governing the conduct of war.”¹¹² For example, you have argued that by using the rules of war, “we are just fighting with one hand behind our back”¹¹³ and that “[o]ur boys should not fight by the rules written by dignified men in mahogany rooms eighty years ago. America should fight by its own rules.”¹¹⁴ You have falsely claimed that the laws of war are “why America hasn’t won a war since World War II”¹¹⁵ – making it appear that you are not “familiar with historical episodes such as the Gulf War.”¹¹⁶

You have also voiced support for torture. In 2015, Congress voted overwhelmingly to ban torture across the U.S. government.¹¹⁷ In 2016, however, you praised waterboarding as an “effective” technique, arguing that it was “absolutely a mistake” to take waterboarding off the table and that “all it would take is an executive order...to change that law.”¹¹⁸

Torture is wrong and ineffective. After spending over five years reviewing about 6.3 million pages of documents, the Senate Select Intelligence Committee released a report in 2014 finding that “[t]he use of the CIA’s enhanced interrogation techniques was not an effective means of obtaining accurate information or gaining detainee cooperation.”¹¹⁹ As the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights explained, “[t]he torture and ill-treatment of persons suspected of crimes is not only deeply wrong, but from an interrogator’s perspective, it is also counterproductive” given that “[a]bundant scientific and historical evidence demonstrates

¹⁰⁹ New York Times, “The Metamorphosis of Pete Hegseth: From Critic of War Crimes to Defender of the Accused,” November 21, 2024, Dave Philipps and Carol Rosenberg, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/21/us/politics/pete-hegseth-defense-department.html>; Pete Hegseth, *The War on Warriors: Behind the Betrayal of The Men Who Keep Us Free*, Fox News Books, 2024, p. 175.

¹¹⁰ Pete Hegseth, *The War on Warriors: Behind the Betrayal of The Men Who Keep Us Free*, Fox News Books, 2024, pp. 162 and 175.

¹¹¹ *Id.*, p. 162.

¹¹² The Guardian, “Trump Pentagon pick attacks UN and Nato and urges US to ignore Geneva conventions,” Jason Wilson, November 25, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/nov/25/pete-hegseth-book-attacks-nato-alliances>.

¹¹³ Pete Hegseth, *The War on Warriors: Behind the Betrayal of The Men Who Keep Us Free*, Fox News Books, 2024, p. 181.

¹¹⁴ *Id.*, p. 184.

¹¹⁵ *Id.*, p. 181.

¹¹⁶ The Atlantic, “Donald Trump’s Most Dangerous Cabinet Pick,” Jonathan Chait, November 21, 2024, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2024/11/pete-hegseth-books-trump/680744/>.

¹¹⁷ CNN, “Donald Trump says torture ‘absolutely works’ – but does it?” James Masters, January 26, 2017, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/01/26/politics/donald-trump-torture-waterboarding/index.html>.

¹¹⁸ CNN, “Hegseth has a history of supporting controversial policies involving the military,” Em Steck and Andrew Kaczynski, December 3, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2024/12/03/politics/hegseth-controversial-views-military-kfile/index.html>.

¹¹⁹ CNN, “CIA Torture Report Fast Facts,” September 19, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2015/01/29/us/cia-torture-report-fast-facts/index.html>.

that the information yielded by people who are being subjected to violence is unreliable.”¹²⁰ As a result, “[t]he torture of detainees...creates enormous rage among their larger communities...[and by] feeding the desire for vengeance, torture produces more hatred and more violence.”¹²¹

I am also deeply concerned by your history of personally advocating on behalf of troops accused of war crimes. On Fox News, you “portrayed other troops charged with war crimes as ‘heroes’” and argued that the military prosecution of these servicemembers was “throwing warriors under the bus.”¹²² Your efforts included advocating on behalf of “an Army officer who summarily executed an Afghan and later burned his body in a trash pit,” another “Army officer who gunned down two Afghan civilians—and was turned in by his men,” as well as a Navy SEAL who “was also turned in by his men after slitting the throat of an Iraqi prisoner.”¹²³

You argued that the servicemembers were “wrongly accused of murder after making quick decisions in the fog of war.”¹²⁴ However, none of these cases “involved the split-second decisions [you] often described” and “[m]ost of the accused service members had executed captives after the shooting had stopped.”¹²⁵ Even those you defended questioned your advocacy – a “former Green Beret who admitted to killing a detainee, said that [your] championing of the accused sometimes went too far, but that [you were] one of the few people willing to question his prosecution.”¹²⁶ You directly appealed to President Trump to intervene in these cases and ultimately persuaded him to go against the decisions of military leaders by “overruling the recommendations of leaders at the Pentagon in four cases.”¹²⁷

You also have also continued to show support for servicemembers accused of crimes during your nomination process. The security guard escorting you during visits to Senators on Capitol Hill, was charged with aggravated assault and reckless endangerment by the Army and “[a] military court jury found him guilty of the assault charge in a court-martial in 2020.”¹²⁸ Although a judge later declared a mistrial in this case, your decision to hire an individual with this history and to support individuals accused of serious crimes calls into question your judgment and ability to serve as Secretary of Defense. As former Under Secretary of Defense Michèle A. Flournoy

¹²⁰ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, September 22, 2017, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2017/09/torture-during-interrogations-illegal-immoral-and-ineffective>.

¹²¹ *Id.*

¹²² New York Times, “The Metamorphosis of Pete Hegseth: From Critic of War Crimes to Defender of the Accused,” November 21, 2024, Dave Philipps and Carol Rosenberg, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/21/us/politics/pete-hegseth-defense-department.html>.

¹²³ The Free Press, “Why Does Pete Hegseth Keep Talking About ‘Warfighters’?” Elliot Ackerman, December 10, 2024, <https://www.thefp.com/p/pete-hegseth-warfighters-fox-news-trump>.

¹²⁴ New York Times, “The Metamorphosis of Pete Hegseth: From Critic of War Crimes to Defender of the Accused,” November 21, 2024, Dave Philipps and Carol Rosenberg, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/21/us/politics/pete-hegseth-defense-department.html>.

¹²⁵ *Id.*

¹²⁶ *Id.*

¹²⁷ *Id.*

¹²⁸ New York Times, “Hegseth’s Guard Left the Army After the Beating of a Civilian During Training,” December 16, 2024, Dave Phillipps and Sharon LaFraniere, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/16/us/politics/hegseth-bodyguard-army.html>.

explained, your actions indicate “a pattern of disregard for the military institutional efforts to hold its own accountable.”¹²⁹

Under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), there are guardrails to prevent commanding officers and civilian leaders from unduly influencing court-martials or other military tribunals.¹³⁰ As described by the Judge Advocate General’s Legal Center and School, “Unlawful command influence (UCI) is the improper use, or perception of use, of superior authority to interfere with the court-martial process.”¹³¹ It explains that “UCI is consistently called ‘the mortal enemy of military justice’” and that “[t]he mere *appearance* of UCI can be as devastating to public perception about the fairness of our system as *actual* UCI.”¹³² Your decision to get involved in these cases raises concerns about whether you recognize the danger of UCI and will protect against it if you become Secretary of Defense.

Given concerns regarding your past actions and views, I request answers to the following questions:

1. If confirmed as Secretary of Defense, will you commit to upholding the Geneva Convention and other international law governing the conduct of war? What do you understand to be your roles and responsibilities in upholding these laws?
2. Do you think servicemembers should ignore directives limiting when they can shoot?
3. If confirmed as Secretary of Defense, will you commit to not authorizing or supporting, either directly or indirectly, the use of torture, including waterboarding?
4. Given your past comments in support of torture and the rules of warfare, how will you pledge to uphold and instill an environment in which commanders follow the laws of war and mitigate civilian harm?
5. If confirmed as Secretary of Defense, will you commit to consulting counsel and not interfering with future cases regarding potential war crimes perpetrated by U.S. troops and allowing the decisions to be made in accordance with the military judicial process and the decisions of related commanders, as applicable?
6. If confirmed as Secretary of Defense, will you pledge to support and uphold due process in any cases where a servicemember(s) is accused of war crimes?
7. What do you understand to be the importance of preventing undue command influence or unlawful command influence?

¹²⁹ *Id.*

¹³⁰ 10 U.S.C. 837; 10 U.S.C. 1802.

¹³¹ The Judge Advocate General’s Legal Center and School, “Chapter 2: Unlawful Command Influence,” <https://tjaglcs.army.mil/Criminal-Law-Deskbook?topic=02.+Unlawful+Command+Influence>.

¹³² *Id.*

8. What do you understand to be your roles and responsibilities in preventing undue command influence or unlawful command influence as Secretary of Defense?

Threats to Diversity in the Military

A diverse military is critical to supporting our national security. The RAND Corporation determined that the U.S. military can leverage diversity to help with “innovation, adaptation and quality of decision-making.”¹³³ It also supports the U.S.’s “external legitimacy, enhancing ability to project influence and improving engagement with partners, allies and other domestic and international audiences” and is critical for “[i]mproving the Armed Forces' ability to attract, retain and foster skills needed to address current and evolving national security imperatives.”¹³⁴ DoD officials have been clear that, “[d]iversity, equity and inclusion in the military are necessities for the United States” and that “[t]he military must be able to attract, train and retain them for the services to retain competitive edges.”¹³⁵ Senate Armed Services Committee Chair Roger Wicker has also stated that “the United States military has been decades ahead of the rest of our society in inclusion” and “is the greatest civil rights program in the history of the world.”¹³⁶ Individuals who identify as members of minority groups are a crucial backbone of the U.S. military, comprising nearly 30 percent of servicemembers.¹³⁷

But your rhetoric indicates a blatant disregard for the sacrifices of minority servicemembers who volunteer to protect our country and are willing to lay down their lives. You have claimed that, “The dumbest phrase on planet Earth in the military is ‘our diversity is our strength.’”¹³⁸ As noted above, you also called for firing of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and “Any general that was involved, any general, admiral, whatever, that was involved in any of the DEI woke s***...”¹³⁹ Additionally, you complained in *The War on Warriors* that “a woke military emphasizes the made-up military values of ‘diversity and inclusion’ and fails to recruit masculine men who make up our warrior class.”¹⁴⁰

¹³³ RAND Corporation, “Leveraging diversity for military effectiveness,” Linda Slapakova, Ben Caves, Marek N. Posard, et al., August 23, 2022, p. 6, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1026-1.html.

¹³⁴ *Id.*

¹³⁵ U.S. Department of Defense, “Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Are Necessities in U.S. Military,” Jim Garamone, February 9, 2022, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/2929658/diversity-equity-inclusion-are-necessities-in-us-military/>.

¹³⁶ Senate Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Personnel, “Hearing to Receive Testimony on Military and Civilian Personnel Programs in the Department of Defense in Review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2024 and the Future Years Defense Program” March 15, 2023, p. 12, https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/23-11_03-15-2023.pdf.

¹³⁷ U.S. Department of Defense, “2023 Demographics: Profile of the Military Community,” December 16, 2024, p. 7, <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2023-demographics-report.pdf>.

¹³⁸ NPR, “What's behind defense secretary pick Hegseth's war on 'woke,’” Shannon Bond, Tom Bowman, Odette Yousef, and Quil Lawrence, November 15, 2024, <https://www.npr.org/2024/11/14/nx-s1-5191941/pete-hegseth-defense-department-dei>.

¹³⁹ Politico, “‘Who the f--k is this guy?’: Defense world reacts to Trump’s surprise Pentagon pick,” Joe Gould, Robbie Gramer, Paul McLeary, Connor O’Brien, and Jack Detsch, November 12, 2024, <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/11/12/defense-world-reacts-to-trump-pick-pete-hegseth-00189221>.

¹⁴⁰ Pete Hegseth, *The War on Warriors: Behind the Betrayal of The Men Who Keep Us Free*, Fox News Books, 2024, p. 152.

While you claim that you “had no problem” with the military’s decision to allow gay troops to serve openly by ending its Don’t Ask Don’t Tell policy, you also said in a podcast in November 2024 that you “came to see the decision as just one waypoint on the road to what [you] see[] as a fully ‘woke’ military.”¹⁴¹ In a book you published in 2024, you wrote that, when Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell (DADT) was repealed, you were initially “mostly ambivalent” but you “now regret that passive perspective.”¹⁴² Instead, you now believe that “[t]he repeal of DADT was the breach in the wire—the foothold—the Left needed to push *much more* extreme ideology through the gap.”¹⁴³ You complained that, “When it comes to transgenderism in the military, the shuttering of the ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ policies during the Obama administration effectively created a dual reality: soldiers can do what they want sexually in their own time *and* a soldier’s sexual life is now open at work. Homosexuality was no longer disqualifying...so the moral and/or cultural rationale for barring transgenders collapsed.”¹⁴⁴ These comments are alarming for members of the LGBTQ+ community who bravely volunteer to defend our country as well as for their spouses and for their families.

You have argued that the U.S. military has embraced “‘trans’ lunacy.”¹⁴⁵ You also “mock[] and misgender[] transgender servicemembers” throughout *The War on the Warriors*,¹⁴⁶ disrespecting the approximately 150,000 transgender Americans who have served in the military as of 2014.¹⁴⁷ Your comments on transgender troops are especially alarming given reports that the transition team of President-elect Trump “is developing an executive order that would medically discharge the estimated 15,000 transgender service members from the military.”¹⁴⁸ According to SPARTA Pride, “the average transgender service member is a senior [non-commissioned officer] with 12 years’ experience and at least two deployments.”¹⁴⁹ Reinstating a ban on transgender troops would undermine military readiness by taking these estimated 15,000 servicemembers out of the military and taking away experienced troops. As the military continues to fall short of its recruitment goals,¹⁵⁰ it cannot risk losing even more troops in the face of the unwelcoming environment you are already creating.

¹⁴¹ Washington Post, “Trump Pentagon pick dismissed military diversity drive, demonized Islam,” Missy Ryan and Evan Hill, November 14, 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/11/14/pete-hegseth-women-transgender-islam-trump/>.

¹⁴² Pete Hegseth, *The War on Warriors: Behind the Betrayal of The Men Who Keep Us Free*, Fox News Books, 2024, p. 193.

¹⁴³ *Id.*, p. 195.

¹⁴⁴ *Id.*, pp. 57-58.

¹⁴⁵ *Id.*, p. 48.

¹⁴⁶ PBS News, “7 things to know about Pete Hegseth, Trump’s defense secretary pick,” Meg Kinnard, November 18, 2024, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/7-things-to-know-about-pete-hegseth-trumps-defense-secretary-pick>; Pete Hegseth, *The War on Warriors: Behind the Betrayal of The Men Who Keep Us Free*, Fox News Books, 2024, Chapter 4.

¹⁴⁷ UCLA School of Law Williams Institute, “Transgender Military Service in the United States,” Gary J. Gates and Jody L. Herman, May 2014, <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/trans-military-service-us/>.

¹⁴⁸ Military.com, “Trump Reportedly Weighs Immediate Discharge of All Transgender Troops. Here's What That Would Mean,” Konstantin Toropin and Thomas Novelty, November 25, 2024, <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2024/11/25/trump-reportedly-weighs-immediate-discharge-of-all-transgender-troops-heres-what-would-mean.html>.

¹⁴⁹ *Id.*

¹⁵⁰ Vox, “America isn’t ready for another war – because it doesn’t have the troops,” Gil Barndollar and Matthew C. Mai, September 1, 2024, <https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/368528/us-military-army-navy-recruit-numbers>.

While you began making attempts in mid-December 2024 to backpedal on some of your comments,¹⁵¹ your anti-LGBTQ+ sentiments appear to be deeply held beliefs. Your past rhetoric is deeply harmful to members of the LGBTQ+ community who have made the decision to serve our country and are willing to sacrifice their lives. This makes it extremely difficult for LGBTQ+ servicemembers and their families to feel they can serve safely under your leadership and the anti-LGBTQ+ environment your rhetoric encourages.

Additionally, you have targeted bipartisan policies that were established to create a stronger, more inclusive force. As part of the fiscal year (FY) 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), Congress passed into law a commission to rename federal bases and other military property named after Confederate figures.¹⁵² The panel recommended new names for nine installations and other federal property named after Confederate soldiers, and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin accepted its recommendations.¹⁵³ President-elect Trump has claimed that he will reverse the renaming of these bases,¹⁵⁴ and according to press reports, you are “seemingly onboard with that plan, calling [the renaming of bases] a mistake of former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Gen. Mark Milley.”¹⁵⁵ It is also unclear if you understand the facts of how this commission came into being since you argued that it was “General Mark Milley who created the Naming Commission”¹⁵⁶ when in actuality, it was established on a bipartisan basis by Congress.¹⁵⁷

As Secretary of Defense, you would set the tone for the environment within DoD to recruit the best and brightest of our country to serve. Bigoted and disrespectful language only serves to sow division among our troops and exclude servicemembers who love our country and are willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for it.

Given your past behavior and rhetoric, I request answers to the following questions:

¹⁵¹ Politico, “Hegseth does a 180 on women and gays in combat,” Joe Gould and Connor O’Brien, December 13, 2024, <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/12/13/hegseth-women-gays-military-comments-walkback-00194156>.

¹⁵² Politico, “Lawmakers vow to fight Trump if he restores Confederate base names,” Joe Gould, Connor O’Brien, and Paul McLeary, October 9, 2024, <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/10/09/lawmakers-trump-confederate-base-00183057>.

¹⁵³ *Id.*; U.S. Department of Defense, “Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III Directs Implementation of the Naming Commission's Recommendations,” press release, October 6, 2022, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3182169/secretary-of-defense-lloyd-j-austin-iii-directs-implementation-of-the-naming-co/>.

¹⁵⁴ Politico, “Lawmakers vow to fight Trump if he restores Confederate base names,” Joe Gould, Connor O’Brien, and Paul McLeary, October 9, 2024, <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/10/09/lawmakers-trump-confederate-base-00183057>.

¹⁵⁵ Breaking Defense, “From firing generals to limiting women in combat, Hegseth hints at possible Pentagon shakeup,” Ashley Roque, November 13, 2024, <https://breakingdefense.com/2024/11/from-firing-generals-to-limiting-women-in-combat-hegseth-hints-at-possible-pentagon-shakeup/>.

¹⁵⁶ Pete Hegseth, *The War on Warriors: Behind the Betrayal of the Men Who Keep Us Free*, Fox News Books, 2024, p. 23.

¹⁵⁷ William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, Public Law 116-283, Sec. 370.

1. How do you expect to meet recruiting goals and attract the most effective future leaders if you continue to insult and denigrate servicemembers who are racial minorities or part of the LGBTQ+ community?
2. Do you believe that LGBTQ+ servicemembers should be allowed to openly serve in our military?
3. If confirmed as Secretary of Defense, will you commit to allowing LGBTQ+ servicemembers to serve openly in our military?
4. Do you support reverting the names of military property named after confederate soldiers, despite the Naming Commission receiving bipartisan support and working with local communities to make these recommendations?¹⁵⁸
5. Do you believe it is wrong for servicemembers to affiliate with white supremacist or extremist groups, such as the Proud Boys¹⁵⁹ and Oath Keepers?¹⁶⁰ If not, why?
6. If you are confirmed as Secretary of Defense, will you commit to implementing the recommendations of the Countering Extremist Activity Working Group?¹⁶¹

Advocating for War Against Political Enemies

The Department of Defense prides itself as being apolitical and upholding our democratic norms. However, you have a history of implied threats of violence against those who do not share your political views.¹⁶²

In your 2024 book, *The War on Warriors*, you wrote that, “just like an enemy at war, the radical Left never stops moving and planning. They do not respect cease-fires, do not abide by the rules of warfare, and do not respect anything except total defeat of their enemy—and then total control... They are willing to fight by any means necessary, which includes destroying the very Constitution that cloaks their treason.”¹⁶³ You explained:

¹⁵⁸ Politico, “Lawmakers vow to fight Trump if he restores Confederate base names,” Joe Gould, Connor O’Brien, and Paul McLeary, October 9, 2024, <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/10/09/lawmakers-trump-confederate-base-00183057>.

¹⁵⁹ The Guardian, “Proud Boys are a dangerous ‘white supremacist’ group say US agencies,” Jason Wilson, October 1, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/01/proud-boys-white-supremacist-group-law-enforcement-agencies>.

¹⁶⁰ Anti-Defamation League, “The Oath Keepers Data Leak: Unmasking Extremism in Public Life,” September 6, 2022, <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/oath-keepers-data-leak-unmasking-extremism-public-life>.

¹⁶¹ U.S. Department of Defense, “Department of Defense Releases Report on Countering Extremist Activities and Outlines Next Steps,” press release, December 20, 2021, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/2879763/departments-of-defense-releases-report-on-countering-extremist-activities-and-ou/>.

¹⁶² Vanity Fair, “Trump’s Defense Secretary Pick Pete Hegseth Said to Face Previous Sexual Misconduct Allegation,” Gabriel Sherman, November 14, 2024, <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/story/pete-hegseth-misconduct-allegation-meeting>.

¹⁶³ Pete Hegseth, *The War on Warriors: Behind the Betrayal of the Men Who Keep Us Free*, Fox News Books, 2024, p. 3.

This book comes at a moment—and I write this without hyperbole—that we should be in panic mode. Almost desperate. Willing to do anything necessary to defeat the “fundamental transformation” of the American military and end the war on our warriors. In *Battle for the American Mind*...we argued for an “educational insurgency”...*The War on Warriors* calls for the exact opposite. In this book, there is no time—or room—for an insurgency. The Left captured the military quickly, and we must reclaim it at a faster pace. We must wage a frontal assault. A swift counterattack, in broad daylight. If we wait for nightfall, they will regroup...If we lose it—we are toast.¹⁶⁴

In your 2020 book, *American Crusade*, you declared that “Only the categorical defeat of the Left will secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity” and that America’s “fate relies on exorcising the leftist specter dominating education, religion, and culture—a 360-degree holy war for the righteous cause of human freedom.”¹⁶⁵ You laid out the book, explaining that, “In the chapters that follow, we’ll face every enemy that threatens our nation and undergo a basic training in the fight for freedom: the American Crusade...Crusaders, welcome to the Warring Twenties!”¹⁶⁶ You also called “the American Left...an existential threat to freedom” and later wrote, “Our American Crusade is not about literal swords, and our fight is not with guns. *Yet.*”¹⁶⁷ In the book, you also call for the reader to take further action if President Trump won reelection: “Then, with four more years of President Trump in the White House, get even more proactive. If you don’t own a gun, buy one. Train to use it. And then buy more. If you’re not in good physical condition, get off the couch and get into shape. Most of us will not save America from our keyboards; we’re going to have to get out, pound the pavement, and outhustle the Left.”¹⁶⁸

You conclude that if President Trump lost the 2020 election and if Americans lose this “crusade,” then “America will decline and die. A national divorce will ensue. Outnumbered freedom lovers will fight back. The military and police, both bastions of freedom-loving patriots, will be forced to make a choice. It will not be good. Yes, there will be some form of civil war...If America is split, freedom will no longer have an army.”¹⁶⁹

While you claimed that “I am not advocating any sort of violence in this book. The American Crusade is a war against destructive *ideas*. We are not calling for violence. I *am* saying that our founders would have compelled you to be prepared, because the clash is ongoing and only going to get nastier,”¹⁷⁰ your deliberate choice to frame your differences with a political party as a war calls into question whether you would be able to lead DoD in an apolitical manner.¹⁷¹

You have also valorized the January 6, 2021 insurrectionists and have spread false conspiracy theories about the attack on the U.S. Capitol. You have portrayed the January 6th crowd as patriots who “love freedom” and are “people who love our country” who were “re-awoken to the

¹⁶⁴ *Id.*, p. 5.

¹⁶⁵ Pete Hegseth, *American Crusade*, Center Street, 2020, p. 14.

¹⁶⁶ *Id.*, p. 15.

¹⁶⁷ *Id.*, pp. 33 and 293.

¹⁶⁸ *Id.*, p. 308.

¹⁶⁹ *Id.*, pp. 298-299.

¹⁷⁰ *Id.*, p. 294.

¹⁷¹ *Id.*, p. 33.

reality of what the left has done” to their country.”¹⁷² After the attack on the Capitol, you “spread baseless conspiracy theories claiming the initial break-in was a false flag operation carried out by leftist groups disguised as Trump supporters.”¹⁷³ You were also removed from President Biden’s inauguration because of concerns that you were an insider threat after reports that your “Deus Vult” tattoo “was a Christian expression associated with right-wing extremism.”¹⁷⁴ We cannot have a Defense Secretary whose fellow servicemembers feel concerned enough about to report as a potential insider threat.

Before January 6th, you also “amplified false claims that the 2020 election was stolen, a narrative that fueled the violence at the Capitol that day.”¹⁷⁵ You claimed that there was “something massive going on underneath” and in 2021 you “repeatedly declined to say if Trump lost the 2020 election during a contentious exchange with a Democratic lawmaker that July on Fox News.”¹⁷⁶ Republican election officials and President Trump’s Attorney General Bill Barr have acknowledged that there is “no evidence of massive fraud in any states or across the country” and despite President Trump and his supporters filing over 60 lawsuits in six battleground states, they “lost every case.”¹⁷⁷

We cannot have a Secretary of Defense who is peddling conspiracy theories and making claims that are devoid of reality. In response to these reports, I request answers to the following questions:

1. Do you think it’s proper to resolve political disagreements by using the military to punish or retaliate against those with whom you or someone else, including President Trump, disagrees?
2. In your book, *American Crusade*, you claim that America’s “fate relies on exorcising the leftist specter dominating education, religion, and culture—a 360-degree holy war for the righteous cause of human freedom” and that “the American Left is an existential threat to freedom.”¹⁷⁸

¹⁷² AP News, “Trump Pentagon pick had been flagged by fellow service member as possible ‘Insider Threat,’” Tara Copp, Michelle R. Smith, and Jason Dearen, November 15, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/trump-defense-department-pentagon-hegseth-fox-news-8cd9f065e54a7cbbaceec8bae9261a6>.

¹⁷³ CNN, “KFile: Pete Hegseth spread baseless conspiracy theories that January 6 attack was carried out by leftist groups,” Andrew Kaczynski and Winter Hawk, December 17, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2024/12/17/politics/kfile-pete-hegseth-conspiracy-theories-january-6/index.html>.

¹⁷⁴ Reuters, “How Trump’s Pentagon pick Hegseth fell out of love with the US military,” Phil Stewart and Idrees Ali, November 15, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/how-trumps-pentagon-pick-hegseth-fell-out-love-with-us-military-2024-11-15/>.

¹⁷⁵ CNN, “KFile: Pete Hegseth spread baseless conspiracy theories that January 6 attack was carried out by leftist groups,” Andrew Kaczynski and Winter Hawk, December 17, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2024/12/17/politics/kfile-pete-hegseth-conspiracy-theories-january-6/index.html>.

¹⁷⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷⁷ *Id.*

¹⁷⁸ Pete Hegseth, *American Crusade*, Center Street, 2020, pp. 14 and 33.

- a. Do you believe that any of the 3.4 million members¹⁷⁹ of the Armed Forces are part of the “Left” and “leftist specter”?
 - b. If so, do you intend to engage in or support efforts to target them in your efforts to support the “categorical defeat of the Left?”¹⁸⁰
3. In your book, *American Crusade*, you write that “The military ... will be forced to make a choice.”¹⁸¹
 - a. What did you mean by this?
 - b. What role will you play in that choice as Secretary of Defense?
4. Did President-elect Trump lose the 2020 election?
5. Did President Biden win the 2020 election?
6. Do you think January 6th was a false flag operation?
7. How does having domestic extremists who support violence against the U.S. government and their fellow Americans in the military undermine readiness and cohesion?
8. How does ignoring concerns about domestic extremists who support violence against the U.S. government and their fellow Americans undermine the Department’s ability to recruit a diverse force and support the nearly thirty percent of servicemembers who identify as part of a minority group?¹⁸²

Opposition to Working with Allies

In order to advance our national security, the Secretary of Defense must work with allies and partners to foster legitimacy and cooperation, coordinate on intelligence, and marshal the personnel and materials available for the DoD’s mission. But your past statements indicate you do not recognize the importance of our relationships with allies and partners.

International and multilateral organizations are key to supporting U.S. interests and security around the globe. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was established “to safeguard the freedom and security of all its members.”¹⁸³ DoD has confirmed that “NATO remains a vital and crucial alliance, and leaders of political parties on both sides of the Atlantic agree that

¹⁷⁹ Military OneSource, “2023 Demographics,” Chapter 1: Total Military Force, <https://demographics.militaryonesource.mil/chapter-1-total-military-force>.

¹⁸⁰ Pete Hegseth, *American Crusade*, Center Street, 2020, p. 14.

¹⁸¹ *Id.* p. 298-299.

¹⁸² U.S. Department of Defense, “2023 Demographics: Profile of the Military Community,” December 16, 2024, p. 7, <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2023-demographics-report.pdf>.

¹⁸³ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “NATO’s purpose,” May 29, 2024, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_68144.htm.

NATO must be deemed one of the most successful collective defense alliances in history.”¹⁸⁴ Instead of recognizing this, you have written that, “The defense of Europe is not our problem; been there, done that, twice...NATO is a relic and should be scrapped and remade in order for freedom to be truly defended.”¹⁸⁵ You have also argued that, “NATO is not an alliance; it’s a defense arrangement for Europe, paid for and underwritten by the United States.”¹⁸⁶

Additionally, you have “expressed skepticism about the idea that supporting Kyiv is needed to keep Russia from moving into NATO territory” and have implied sympathy toward Russian President Vladimir Putin by calling Russia’s invasion of Ukraine “Putin’s give me my s*** back war.”¹⁸⁷ Your views on NATO fail to recognize something that a Secretary of Defense should be aware of — that the U.S. support for this alliance contributes to our own security and that NATO has been “a force for peace that stared down the Soviet Union, prevented a larger war in the Balkans, joined in the fight against international terrorism and even now stands ready to defend all NATO territory from Russian aggression.”¹⁸⁸

Under the previous Trump Administration, DoD noted the benefits of the UN, including its peacekeeping operations, writing that “The United States recognizes multilateral peace operations as a primary tool used by the international community to address conflict-related crises” and that “Burden sharing amongst nations is important to make them most effective.”¹⁸⁹ You, however, have referred to the UN as “a fully globalist organization that aggressively advances an anti-American, anti-Israel, and antifreedom agenda,” and that “[w]e should just lop it off from the island of Manhattan and let it float out to sea.”¹⁹⁰ You have also “criticized international institutions like the United Nations as a ‘farce’ and ‘giant joke.’”¹⁹¹

I am also concerned about how your anti-Muslim rhetoric will undermine the ability of the U.S. to work with Muslim leaders and Muslim-majority countries to support our national security. You were described as “drunkenly chanting ‘Kill All Muslims! Kill All Muslims!’” at a bar while on an official tour through Ohio for the Concerned Veterans for America while you were

¹⁸⁴ U.S. Department of Defense, “U.S. Officials Agree NATO's Worth is Unquestionable,” Jim Garamone, July 8, 2024, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3825855/us-officials-agree-natos-worth-is-unquestionable/>.

¹⁸⁵ Pete Hegseth, *American Crusade*, Center Street, 2020, p. 112.

¹⁸⁶ *Id.* p. 110.

¹⁸⁷ Breaking Defense, “From firing generals to limiting women in combat, Hegseth hints at possible Pentagon shakeup,” Ashley Roque, November 13, 2024, <https://breakingdefense.com/2024/11/from-firing-generals-to-limiting-women-in-combat-hegseth-hints-at-possible-pentagon-shakeup/>.

¹⁸⁸ U.S. Department of Defense, “U.S. Officials Agree NATO's Worth is Unquestionable,” Jim Garamone, July 8, 2024, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3825855/us-officials-agree-natos-worth-is-unquestionable/>.

¹⁸⁹ U.S. Department of Defense, Public Affairs Office, “FACT SHEET: U.S. Government Support to United Nations (UN) Peace Operations,” November 16, 2017, <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/UN-PK-DefMin-Fact-Sheet-Final.pdf>.

¹⁹⁰ Pete Hegseth, *American Crusade*, Center Street, 2020, p. 95.

¹⁹¹ ABC News, “Pete Hegseth's plan to overhaul America's military: 'You need to fire a ton of generals,’” Peter Charalambous, November 14, 2024, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/pete-hegseths-plan-overhaul-americas-military-fire-ton/story?id=115842674>.

its president.¹⁹² In your book, *American Crusade*, you have also claimed that, “*all modern Muslim countries are either formal or de facto no-go zones for practicing Christians and Jews.*”¹⁹³ You have complained that “[n]ot only do [globalists] balk at Muslim immigration bans or moratoriums, they celebrate Muslim immigration” and have fearmongered that Islamists will “exploit this view to seed the West with as many Muslims as possible” and that “thanks to their very high birth rates relative to native populations and their strategically insular culture — the sons and daughters of those migrants and refugees multiply in greater numbers than do native citizens.”¹⁹⁴ You pointed “to elected Muslim officials in the United Kingdom and the rise in the European Muslim population over the past three decades to argue that the United States will end up with a similar future absent an intervention.”¹⁹⁵

In 2018, you also said on “Fox & Friends Sunday” that France was experiencing “a slow-motion 9/11” because “Muslims are having 2.6 kids, whereas French-born folks are having 1.6 kids.”¹⁹⁶ You also argued in your book *American Crusade* that Islam “is neither a religion of peace nor a religion of violence; it is a religion of submission” and that it has been “almost entirely captured and leveraged by Islamists.”¹⁹⁷ Your “book also makes the unsubstantiated claim that Islamists account for 25 percent of the global Muslim population with a mission to force the rest of the world to submit or be killed.”¹⁹⁸

During the last Trump administration, President Trump instated a damaging travel ban targeting predominantly Muslim countries.¹⁹⁹ Government officials and experts warned that this decision would “weaken U.S. security and undermine global leadership” and “said it continues to signal to Muslim allies that — as the Islamic State and other extremist propaganda profess — the United States is an enemy of Islam.”²⁰⁰ How we engage our allies matters and is critical to our national security, and your degrading views toward Muslims threaten to undermine our relationships with allies and partners and our efforts to stabilize the Middle East, protect Israel, and fight terrorism.

¹⁹² The New Yorker, “Pete Hegseth’s Secret History,” Jane Mayer, December 1, 2024.

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/pete-hegseths-secret-history>.

¹⁹³ Pete Hegseth, *American Crusade*, Center Street, 2020, p. 293.

¹⁹⁴ *Id.* p. 253.

¹⁹⁵ Washington Post, “Trump Pentagon pick dismissed military diversity drive, demonized Islam,” Missy Ryan and Evan Hill, November 14, 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/11/14/pete-hegseth-women-transgender-islam-trump/>; Pete Hegseth, *American Crusade*, Center Street, 2020, pp. 256-259.

¹⁹⁶ Popular Information, “13 things everyone should know about Pete Hegseth,” Judd Legum, Rebecca Crosby, and Noel Sims, November 18, 2024, <https://popular.info/p/13-things-everyone-should-know-about>.

¹⁹⁷ Pete Hegseth, *American Crusade*, Center Street, 2020, pp. 248-249.

¹⁹⁸ Washington Post, “Trump Pentagon pick dismissed military diversity drive, demonized Islam,” Missy Ryan and Evan Hill, November 14, 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/11/14/pete-hegseth-women-transgender-islam-trump/>; Pete Hegseth, *American Crusade*, Center Street, 2020, p. 248.

¹⁹⁹ New York Times, “Trump’s Revised Travel Ban Is Denounced by 134 Foreign Policy Experts,” Lara Jakes, March 11, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/11/us/politics/trump-travel-ban-denounced-foreign-policy-experts.html>.

²⁰⁰ *Id.*

Additionally, there is an estimated 5,000 to 6,000 Muslims serving in the U.S. military²⁰¹ and a survey evaluating respondents' willingness to serve in the military found that Muslim Americans "are just as likely to join the military as any other demographic within the country's general population."²⁰² Your rhetoric is also harmful to Muslims, including those who have volunteered to serve in our nation's military.

Given my concerns about how your views will impact the ability of the U.S. to strengthen its national security and support international security, I request answers to the following questions:

1. Will you commit to oppose any U.S. withdrawal from NATO or the United Nations if you are confirmed as Secretary of Defense? If not, why not?
2. Do you believe Russia's invasion of Ukraine was lawful?
3. Which parts of Ukraine do you believe rightfully belong to Russia?
4. Do you commit to continuing to support Ukraine against Russia's invasion if you are confirmed as Secretary of Defense?
5. How does your rhetoric disparaging Muslims impact your ability to effectively work with Muslim allies to stabilize the Middle East?
6. How does your rhetoric disparaging Muslims impact your ability to effectively work with Muslim allies to protect Israel?
7. How does your rhetoric disparaging Muslims impact your ability to effectively work with Muslim partners to fight terrorism?
8. How does your rhetoric disparaging Muslims impact your ability to effectively recruit Muslim Americans to join the military in the face of ongoing recruitment challenges?
9. You were reported as chanting "Kill All Muslims!" with another individual at a bar in Ohio in 2015.²⁰³ Is this accurate?
 - a. If not, which portions of this report are inaccurate?
 - b. If so, what was your rationale for this violent call for murder?

²⁰¹ Independent Lens, "The Complex Role and Diverse Array of Chaplains in the Military," Ivonne Spinoza, November 6, 2023, <https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/blog/the-complex-role-and-diverse-array-of-chaplains-in-the-military/>.

²⁰² Military Times, "Muslim Americans as likely to join military as other groups, poll says," Rachel Nostrant, September 21, 2022, <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2022/09/21/muslim-americans-as-likely-to-join-military-as-other-groups-poll-says/>.

²⁰³ The New Yorker, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," Jane Mayer, December 1, 2024. <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/pete-hegseths-secret-history>.

- c. Does this include the approximately 3.45 million Muslims in the United States?²⁰⁴
- d. Does this include the estimated 5,000 to 6,000 Muslims serving in the U.S. military²⁰⁵ and the Muslim Americans who “are just as likely to join the military as any other demographic within the country’s general population?”²⁰⁶
- e. Does this include all Muslims outside of the United States, including those we cooperate with to support U.S. national security and international security?

Undermining Veterans Benefits

While the Secretary of Defense is not charged with supporting servicemembers after they leave the military, the Secretary’s treatment of veterans sets a standard for the support they receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the nation’s respect for their sacrifices. I am concerned by your criticisms of veterans rightfully seeking benefits after service.

In 2019 while on Fox News, you complained that veterans groups “encourage veterans to apply for every government benefit they can ever get after they leave the service.”²⁰⁷ You have also failed veterans by advocating on behalf of for-profit colleges using predatory tactics to enroll veterans. Under the federal “90/10” rule, for-profit colleges were not allowed to “receive more than 90% of their revenue from federal education funds.”²⁰⁸ However, since veterans’ benefits like GI bill stipends were not considered “federal education funds,” this “mean[t] that for every veteran enrolled, a school [could] admit nine more students using federal loans.”²⁰⁹ Veteran advocacy groups²¹⁰ and an investigation by the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee²¹¹ revealed that “this loophole leads to predatory and deceptive marketing tactics that sometimes leave veterans with unexpected debt and useless degrees if schools lose their

²⁰⁴ Pew Research Center, “New estimates show U.S. Muslim population continues to grow,” Besheer Mohamed, January 3, 2018, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2018/01/03/new-estimates-show-u-s-muslim-population-continues-to-grow/>.

²⁰⁵ PBS Independent Lens in Beyond the Films, “The Complex Role and Diverse Array of Chaplains in the Military,” Ivonne Spinoza, November 6, 2023, <https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/blog/the-complex-role-and-diverse-array-of-chaplains-in-the-military/>.

²⁰⁶ Military Times, “Muslim Americans as likely to join military as other groups, poll says,” Rachel Nostrant, September 21, 2022, <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2022/09/21/muslim-americans-as-likely-to-join-military-as-other-groups-poll-says/>.

²⁰⁷ CNN, “Hegseth and Collins’ push for cutting veterans’ health benefits alarms service members and veterans groups,” Natasha Bertrand and Haley Britzky, December 7, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2024/12/07/politics/pete-hegseth-doug-collins-veterans-health-care/index.html>.

²⁰⁸ ProPublica, “For-Profit Colleges Tap a Fox News Host to Influence Trump,” Isaac Arnsdorf, November 20, 2019, <https://www.propublica.org/article/pete-hegseth-for-profit-colleges-tap-a-fox-news-host-to-influence-trump>.

²⁰⁹ *Id.*

²¹⁰ Letter from AMSUS, The American Legion, Air Force Sergeants Association, et al., to Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee Chair Lamar Alexander and Ranking Member Patty Murray and House Committee on Education and the Workforce Chair Bobby Scott and Ranking Member Virginia Foxx, May 2, 2019, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/556718b2e4b02e470eb1b186/t/5cca11f91905f41be87648f5/1556746746801/VSO+MSO+HEA+Priorities.FINAL.2May2019.pdf>.

²¹¹ Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, “For Profit Higher Education: The Failure to Safeguard the Federal Investment and Ensure Student Success,” July 30, 2012, https://www.help.senate.gov/imo/media/for_profit_report/PartI.pdf.

accreditation or go out of business.”²¹² But on June 3, 2019,²¹³ you spoke at the Career Education Colleges and Universities convention where you “pledged to use [your] relationship with Trump to fend off legislation to close the 90/10 loophole” and have “given at least 11 speeches for CECU and related groups.”²¹⁴ It is unclear how much you were compensated for these speeches and advocacy efforts. You have also criticized prominent veterans’ organizations, such as the American Legion, for supporting closure of this loophole.²¹⁵ While this loophole has since been closed due to the harm it could cause for veterans, it is alarming that you would advocate for a policy that veterans advocates flagged as “incentiviz[ing] unscrupulous schools to target veterans with suspect education programs to maximize profits without trying to find students who were investing their own savings.”²¹⁶

Given my concerns regarding your views on veterans, I request answers to the following questions:

1. Why do you think veterans should not be encouraged to apply for the benefits they have earned?
 - a. If veterans are eligible for less benefits, will it impact recruitment efforts?
2. Were you ever paid or compensated by the Career Education Colleges and Universities?
 - a. If so, how much did you receive in compensation?
3. Have you been paid by any other organizations to support the “90/10 loophole”?²¹⁷
 - a. If so, which organizations and how much did they each compensate you? Please provide the year they did so.
4. Do you think veterans should be protected from “predatory and deceptive marketing tactics”²¹⁸ when seeking education using their GI benefits?
 - a. If so, how?

²¹² ProPublica, “For-Profit Colleges Tap a Fox News Host to Influence Trump,” Isaac Arnsdorf, November 20, 2019, <https://www.propublica.org/article/pete-hegseth-for-profit-colleges-tap-a-fox-news-host-to-influence-trump>.

²¹³ Media Matters, “Fox News host Pete Hegseth is working with the for-profit college industry against protections for student veterans,” Eric Hananoki, June 26, 2019, <https://www.mediamatters.org/fox-news/fox-news-host-pete-hegseth-working-profit-college-industry-against-protections-student>.

²¹⁴ ProPublica, “For-Profit Colleges Tap a Fox News Host to Influence Trump,” Isaac Arnsdorf, November 20, 2019, <https://www.propublica.org/article/pete-hegseth-for-profit-colleges-tap-a-fox-news-host-to-influence-trump>.

²¹⁵ The Hill, “Extreme left thinking infiltrates veteran groups — to the detriment of vets,” Pete Hegseth, October 23, 2019, <https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/466543-extreme-left-thinking-infiltrates-veteran-groups-to-the-detriment/>.

²¹⁶ Military Times, “Feds close 90/10 loophole involving veterans education benefits,” Leo Shane III, October 27, 2022, <https://www.militarytimes.com/education-transition/2022/10/27/feds-close-9010-loophole-involving-veterans-education-benefits/>.

²¹⁷ ProPublica, “For-Profit Colleges Tap a Fox News Host to Influence Trump,” Isaac Arnsdorf, November 20, 2019, <https://www.propublica.org/article/pete-hegseth-for-profit-colleges-tap-a-fox-news-host-to-influence-trump>.

²¹⁸ *Id.*

5. Have you ever been paid or compensated by an organization to advocate for a VA-related or DoD-related policy concerning benefits?
 - a. If so, please provide the year, organization, policy, and compensation you received to do so.

6. Have you ever lobbied on behalf of any organization?
 - a. If so, please provide the year, organization, policy, and compensation you received to do so.

Threats to Quality of DoDEA Education

The Department of Defense Education Activity agency (DoDEA) is critical to ensuring that children in military-connected families receive high-quality education. It includes 161 schools across the globe and “educates some 67,000 children of active-duty military and civilian service members.”²¹⁹ According to the 2002 National Assessment of Educational Progress DoDEA schools outperform all states in reading and math in both 4th and 8th grade.²²⁰ However, I am concerned that your past rhetoric regarding education may lead you to implement policies to the detriment of this quality of education. You have urged Americans to “Get your kids out of government school systems right now if you can.”²²¹ In your 2022 book, *Battle for the American Mind*, you and your co-author claim that “Marxist teachers colleges pump out ideological teachers, left-wing teachers unions reign supreme, PTAs are neutered, school boards scared fully ‘woke.’ Almost no school — public or private — seems safe. Conservatives and Christians are surrounded.”²²² You also insist in this book that “classical Christian education” is the solution to “the Left ha[ving] a stranglehold over American education.”²²³ You call for an educational insurgency, arguing, “Our only option is insurgency. Our only chance is to become educational insurgents in our own country... Insurgents don’t play by the old rules, because the old rules are used to protect the status quo—in our case, the Marxists who have taken full control of America’s education system.”²²⁴ While you wrote that, “...our struggle is not military, but instead politico-cultural,” it is nevertheless concerning that you consistently use military terminology when speaking about reforming the U.S. educational system.²²⁵

²¹⁹ Politico, “A Hegseth DOD comes with a battle against public school education,” December 15, 2024, <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/12/15/trumps-defense-pick-pete-hegseth-has-an-opening-to-reshape-american-classrooms-00194364>.

²²⁰ Department of Defense Education Activity, “DoD Schools Ranked Best in the United States on Nation’s Report Card,” Will Griffin, October 24, 2022, <https://www.dodea.edu/news/press-releases/dod-schools-ranked-best-united-states-nations-report-card>.

²²¹ Politico, “A Hegseth DOD comes with a battle against public school education,” December 15, 2024, <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/12/15/trumps-defense-pick-pete-hegseth-has-an-opening-to-reshape-american-classrooms-00194364>.

²²² Pete Hegseth, *Battle for the American Mind*, Broadside Books, 2022, pp. 20-21.

²²³ *Id.*, pp. 220-221.

²²⁴ *Id.*, p. 225.

²²⁵ *Id.*, p. 226.

As Secretary of Defense you would have the authority “to install a new chain of command over the military school system, and use federal contracts to marshal consultants who write new curriculum, testing and teacher training standards.”²²⁶ I am concerned about how you envision expanding these changes you are advocating for to DoDEA schools, and whether you fully recognize that the classroom should be a place for religious inclusion, not just “classical Christian education.”²²⁷

Given these concerns, I request answers to the following questions:

1. Do you believe that DoDEA schools are “government school systems” and that servicemembers should “get [their] kids out of [them] right now?”²²⁸
2. Do you believe that the quality of education provided by DoDEA schools is an important component of retaining and recruiting servicemembers?
3. Would you attempt to change the current curriculum at schools attended by children of servicemembers and children of military-affiliated civilians? If so, how will you make decisions about what changes are appropriate?
4. Specifically, will you make any effort to include additional “classical Christian education?”²²⁹
 - a. If so, how will you make these changes while ensuring that all children of servicemembers – regardless of their religion – receive equal treatment?

Conclusion

I am deeply concerned by the many ways in which your behavior and rhetoric indicates that you are unfit to lead the Department of Defense. One Republican operative described you as “perhaps one of the least qualified picks for Secretary of Defense that we’ve seen” and that you were “likely chosen because [you seem] willing to say and do anything Trump wants.”²³⁰

Your confirmation as Secretary of Defense would be detrimental to our national security and disrespect a diverse array of servicemembers who are willing to sacrifice for our country. A Secretary of Defense must be able to manage a vast, diverse organization; uphold the rule of law; protect the military from politicization; work with allies around the globe; and support the needs

²²⁶ Politico, “A Hegseth DOD comes with a battle against public school education,” December 15, 2024, <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/12/15/trumps-defense-pick-pete-hegseth-has-an-opening-to-reshape-american-classrooms-00194364>.

²²⁷ Pete Hegseth, *Battle for the American Mind*, Broadside Books, 2022, p. 220.

²²⁸ Politico, “A Hegseth DOD comes with a battle against public school education,” December 15, 2024, <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/12/15/trumps-defense-pick-pete-hegseth-has-an-opening-to-reshape-american-classrooms-00194364>.


²²⁹ Pete Hegseth, *Battle for the American Mind*, Broadside Books, 2022, p. 220.

²³⁰ The New Yorker, “Pete Hegseth’s Secret History,” Jane Mayer, December 1, 2024. <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/pete-hegseths-secret-history>.

of servicemembers and their families. These are the qualifications that we should be looking for in the next Secretary of Defense. However, your past behavior and rhetoric indicates your inability to effectively lead this organization and properly support our servicemembers.

I request that you come to your Senate Armed Service Committee nomination hearing prepared to answer these questions, and that you provide written answers no later than January 10, 2025.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator