

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 21, 2025

Peter B. Hegseth
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Hegseth,

We write regarding recent reporting from numerous sources that your Administration is currently circulating a list of names of General and Flag Officers from the United States Armed Forces that are under consideration for dismissal.

We recognize that commissioned military officers serve at the pleasure of the President, and that the President retains the authority to dismiss them. This authority is a fundamental component of civilian control of the military, which is essential to democracy and the rule of law.

We also recognize that all military servicemembers at every level swear an oath to the Constitution of the United States, not to any one person or institution. This oath is sacred and apolitical.

The General and Flag Officers of this country are patriots who have dedicated their lives to the defense of the United States. Most, if not all, of the current three- and four-star General and Flag officers were General or Flag Officers under the first Trump administration and all have served honorably under many administrations of both parties. They are capable, competent, and deeply professional individuals. They take seriously their charge to carry out the political will of the people, and to provide their best professional military advice in furtherance of those objectives in accordance with the laws of armed conflict. Each of them has been confirmed by the United States Senate repeatedly over the course of their careers.

As your administration contemplates removing numerous General and Flag Officers, it is vital that we have transparency on the criteria and process used to evaluate these officers. There are valid reasons to remove a General or Flag Officer, but there must be clear, transparent, and apolitical criteria and processes associated with any such dismissal.

As such, we request answers to the following questions before your administration dismisses any General or Flag Officer:

1. Describe in detail the process by which General and Flag Officers are being evaluated for dismissal, including if all General and Flag Officers will be reviewed, how General and Flag Officers were nominated for review, which elements of an Officer's written record will be reviewed, if Officers will be interviewed, and by whom.
2. Who has the authority to recommend names to the president for dismissal? List, by name and position, all individuals involved in making recommendations to the President on Officers to be dismissed.
3. List any and all factors that would lead the officials named in response to (2) to recommend dismissal.
4. Describe the process by which the justification for dismissal is communicated to the General or Flag Officer, and any forms of redress available to them should that include factually incorrect information.

An apolitical military is an essential component of our democracy and our national security. We appreciate your prompt reply.

Sincerely,



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Don Bacon
Member of Congress



Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



Jason Crow
Member of Congress



Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



Jared Golden
Member of Congress