

September 25, 2025

RE: Urgent Need for Members of Congress to Demand Assurances of No Harmful New DOD Policies or Programs Ahead of Hegseth's Unprecedented Ordering of Virtually All Generals and Admirals to an In-Person Meeting Next Week

Dear Senator:

The American Civil Liberties Union strongly urges you to assert your authority and influence as a member of Congress to demand transparency, accountability, and compliance with the law by Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth ahead of an unprecedented meeting he has called next week of virtually all generals and admirals. We urge you to use your authority and influence before, rather than after, any new harmful policies or programs are announced.



**National Political
Advocacy Department**
915 15th Street, NW, 6th Floor
Washington, DC 20005-2112
aclu.org

Deirdre Schifeling
Chief Political &
Advocacy Officer

Anthony D. Romero
Executive Director

Deborah N. Archer
President

Numerous media outlets are reporting today that Secretary Hegseth has ordered many, most, or all generals and admirals to attend an in-person meeting in Virginia, with some news outlets reporting that he has ordered attendance of nearly all officers at or above the grade of brigadier general. While there is speculation on the topic of the meeting, as of the time of this letter, there is no official statement on why the secretary is calling the meeting or what policies, programs, or other changes he may announce during the meeting.

Over the past eight months since his confirmation, Secretary Hegseth has subjected the military—and the American people—to a barrage of unconstitutional, illegal, or otherwise harmful new policies and programs. None of these changes made the country more secure. Without any explicit authorization from Congress—and sometimes in violation of the Constitution or federal statutes—the secretary has issued orders to: deploy the military in American towns and cities, bomb small boats in the Caribbean in violation of law, fire women and Black top officers, force reporters out of the Pentagon and try to censor the press, rename military bases for disgraced Confederate generals and other segregationists, end any recognition or support for diversity in the military, including even banning books in schools serving the children of service members. While these are only some of the policy and programmatic changes that most directly harm civil liberties and civil rights, the secretary has taken many other actions that are both without congressional authorization and degrade national security.

The ACLU urges you to take action *now, before the secretary meets with the generals and admirals*, to ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance with the law by the secretary. At minimum, the Pentagon must disclose the agenda for the meeting and any planned changes in policy or

program. But more importantly, we urge you to obtain assurances that any changes announced or instituted at the meeting will not result in further unconstitutional, illegal, or other harmful actions. For some members, your action may be directly contacting President Trump, Secretary Hegseth, or other members of the administration to obtain an agreement of no more harmful actions, while for other members, your action may be using press outreach and social media platforms to publicly urge the administration to be transparent, accountable, lawful, and protective rather than harmful to the values embodied in the Constitution.

Thank you for your attention to this request, and please do not hesitate to contact canders@aclu.org with any questions.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Christopher Anders". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christopher Anders
Director, Democracy & Technology