

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 17, 2025

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Chairman
Senate Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Wicker:

We request that you convene an Armed Services Committee hearing with Department of Defense (DoD) leadership regarding the deployment of members of the Armed Forces to American cities and efforts to increasingly dedicate DoD forces, assets, resources and personnel to support the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Concerningly, DoD has deployed members of the Armed Forces to Los Angeles and the District of Columbia and the President has openly stated that an expansion to other cities, including Chicago, Baltimore, New Orleans and Memphis is imminent. In response, state and local leaders are actively protesting the Administration's actions and attempting to remove these military personnel from their streets. These deployments could have devastating effects on our military readiness and trusted relationship between the public and the servicemembers who are meant to protect them from external threats. The Washington Post reported on September 9 that the National Guard, in measuring public sentiment about President Trump's federal takeover of D.C., assessed that its mission is perceived as "leveraging fear," driving a "wedge between citizens and the military," and promoting a sense of "shame" among troops and veterans. In July, the New York Times reported that the retention rate for the National Guardsmen deployed to Los Angeles was projected to be 21 percent, far lower than the Guard's typical 60 percent rate.

Since January 20, 2025, DoD has surged its assistance to DHS across the country. The military has fielded platforms and systems that are much more expensive than their civilian alternatives, such as using military aircraft for deportations and relying on warships and Army surveillance systems for detection and monitoring along the border and in U.S. territory. There has been no official public accounting of how the costs of using these assets compare to more affordable alternatives, which military missions these assets have been redirected from in order to support another agency and whether the DoD has been reimbursed for its services or is effectively siphoning its resources, intended for use by the military, to non-military agencies and missions. DoD has also designated at least five military installations for detentions or support to Federal agents, and detailed DoD and military personnel in rising numbers to provide administrative and logistical assistance for interior law enforcement, with undisclosed impacts to the kind of tough, realistic training required to build lethality and readiness for core military missions.

Additionally, in many public statements since his confirmation, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth has regularly prioritized the southern border *over* the Indo-Pacific, despite a bipartisan consensus that U.S. defense policy should focus on the complex security challenges in that

region. Just last week, press reported that the upcoming National Defense Strategy will formalize this priority order.

The American people deserve clarity on the chosen priorities and missions of the Department of Defense and the short- and long-term implications for national security and responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars of this new focus on a mission usually reserved for law enforcement professionals.

We request the opportunity of a public hearing to help Congress and the public better understand the implications of such large-scale redirection of the U.S. military and defense apparatus for support to traditionally non-military missions. We call on the Department to explain to Congress and the American people how it plans to resource, execute and justify such a campaign, and how doing so will impact military readiness, the U.S. military's execution of core missions of deterring and preparing for war, public trust in our military, implications for servicemembers and their families across the United States and the safety of the American people.

As Members of this Committee, we take seriously our solemn responsibility to make sure the U.S. military is properly led, authorized, well-resourced, supported and able to conduct its mission of defending the nation -- without distraction, inefficiency or partisanship. At the same time, our Constitution based our democracy on maintaining clear boundaries between the military and domestic functions of civilian law enforcement, expressed especially in the Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Amendments that responded to British Army overreach. We believe it is critical that we conduct public oversight to ensure that the use of military power remains lawful, constitutional, strategically justified and responsible and transparent to the American public.

For these reasons, we urge the Committee to convene a hearing at the earliest opportunity to examine these issues directly with Department of Defense leaders.

Sincerely,



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



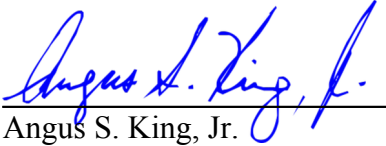
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



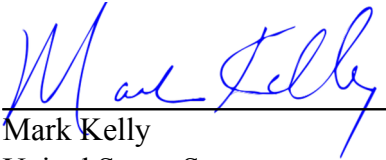
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