

PETE HEGSETH

MEDIA TOOLKIT

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PERSONAL BACKGROUND _____

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Full Name	Peter Brian Hegseth
Date of Birth	June 6, 1980 (44 years old)
Primary Residence	3057 Patton Branch Rd, Goodlettsville, TN 37072
Spouse	Jennifer Rauchet
Children	4 children, 3 stepchildren
Education	1999: Valedictorian at Forest Lake Area High School 2003: Princeton University, B.A. in Politics
Religion	Christian
Current Employment	Fox News political commentator Nominee, U.S. Secretary of Défense



Social Media

Personal Website	PeteHegseth.com
Facebook	PeteHegseth
X	@PeteHegseth
Instagram	petehegseth

TIMELINE

June 6, 1980: Born in Minneapolis, MN. (Jane Mayer, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)

1999: Graduated as valedictorian from Forest Lake Area High School in Forest Lake, Minnesota. (Gabriel Sherman, "The Storybook Start—And Bitter End—Of Pete Hegseth's First Marriage," [Vanity Fair](#), 12/3/24)

2003: Graduated from Princeton University with an undergraduate degree in Politics. Member of the varsity basketball team, an Army ROTC cadet, and the publisher of the campus conservative publication, *The Princeton Tory*. ([Pete Hegseth's Biography](#), Accessed 12/6/24)

2003: Joined Bear Stearns as an equity capital markets analyst and was also commissioned as an infantry officer in the Minnesota National Guard. ([Pete Hegseth's Biography](#), Accessed 12/6/24; Jane Mayer, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)

2004-2005: Served in Guantanamo Bay (JTF-GTMO) as a Second Lieutenant with his New Jersey Army National Guard unit. ([Pete Hegseth's Biography](#), Accessed 12/6/24)

2004-2009: Married to Meredith Schwarz. (Gabriel Sherman, "The Storybook Start—And Bitter End—Of Pete Hegseth's First Marriage," [Vanity Fair](#), 12/3/24)

2005- 2006: Deployed to Iraq as a First Lieutenant with the 3rd Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division, serving as an Infantry Platoon Leader in Baghdad in 2005 and as a Civil-Military Operations officer in Samarra in 2006. ([Pete Hegseth's Biography](#), Accessed 12/6/24)

2007-2010: Served as Executive Director of Vets for Freedom. ([Pete Hegseth's Biography](#), Accessed 12/6/24)

2010-2017: Married Samantha Deering Hegseth. (Gabriel Sherman, "The Storybook Start—And Bitter End—Of Pete Hegseth's First Marriage," [Vanity Fair](#), 12/3/24)

2012: Deployed to Afghanistan with the Minnesota Army National Guard as a Captain where he was the senior counterinsurgency instructor at the Counterinsurgency Training Center in Kabul. ([Pete Hegseth's Biography](#), Accessed 12/6/24)

2012: Ran for the Republican nomination for U.S. Senate in Minnesota but withdrew before the primary. (Mayer, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)

2012-2015: Served as CEO of the nonprofit, Concerned Veterans for America. ([Pete Hegseth's Biography](#), Accessed 12/6/24)

2013: Earned a Master of Public Policy from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. ([Pete Hegseth's Biography](#), Accessed 12/6/24)

2014: Joined Fox News Channel as a contributor. (Brian Stelter, "How Pete Hegseth Went From Fox News Host To Trump's Defense Secretary Pick," [CNN](#), 11/13/24; Jane Mayer, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)

2016: Released the book, *In the Arena: Good Citizens, a Great Republic, and How One Speech Can Reinvigorate America*. (Pete Hegseth, [Amazon Books](#), Accessed 12/4/24)

2017: Became a co-host of "Fox & Friends Weekend." (Brian Stelter, "How Pete Hegseth Went From Fox News Host To Trump's Defense Secretary Pick," [CNN](#), 11/13/24)

August 2017: Welcomed a daughter with Fox executive producer Jennifer Rauchet and divorced his wife at the time, Samantha Deering. (Jane Mayer, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)

August 2019: Married Jennifer Rauchet. (Gabriel Sherman, "The Storybook Start—And Bitter End—Of Pete Hegseth's First Marriage," [Vanity Fair](#), 12/3/24)

2020: Released the book, "American Crusade: Our Fight to Stay Free," a book supporting Trump's re-election. (Pete Hegseth, [Amazon Books](#), Accessed 12/4/24)

2021: Removed from the National Guard unit assigned to President Biden's inauguration due to concerns over tattoos associated with extremist groups. (Will Carless, "Trump Defense Pick Says He Was Pulled From Inauguration Duty For 'Extremist' Tattoo," [USA Today](#), 11/15/24)

2022: Released the book, "Battle for the American Mind: Uprooting a Century of Miseducation," criticizing the U.S. education system. (Pete Hegseth, [Amazon Books](#), Accessed 12/4/24)

2024: Released the book, "The War on Warriors: Behind the Betrayal of the Men Who Keep Us Free," discussing perceived issues in the military. (Pete Hegseth, [Amazon Books](#), Accessed 12/4/24)

November 12, 2024: Nominated by President-elect Donald Trump for the position of U.S. Secretary of Defense. (Trump Vance Transition, [Press Release](#), 11/12/24)

FACT VS. FICTION

QUALIFICATIONS TO BE DEFENSE SECRETARY

Hegseth Has Been Criticized For His Lack Of Experience, With The Media Often Referring To Him As Simply A Fox News Personality; However, He Has Extensive Combat Experience And Is A Decorated Veteran

Several News Outlets Have Described Hegseth As A Fox News Host, Rather Than Focusing On His Extensive Military Career

November 13, 2024 CNN Headline: "How Pete Hegseth Went From Fox News Host To Trump's Defense Secretary Pick." "Two years ago, Pete Hegseth relocated his family from New Jersey, near Fox News headquarters, to a small town outside of Nashville, Tennessee. The red state move was on-brand for the 'Fox & Friends' co-host, who takes his kids shooting, posts pictures wearing anti-President Biden slogans, and emphasizes his Christian faith. Now Hegseth, his wife and their seven children may have to relocate again, this time to Washington, DC. On Tuesday evening, President-elect Donald Trump said Hegseth is his pick for Defense Secretary – a decision that shocked even some of his friends at Fox. Hegseth is a decorated Army veteran who served in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. But nothing in his biography suggests experience leading large organizations." (Brian Stetler, "How Pete Hegseth Went From Fox News Host To Trump's Defense Secretary Pick," [CNN](#), 11/13/24)

- **CNN Described Hegseth As A "Decorated Army Veteran Who Served In Iraq And Afghanistan As Well As Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, But Claimed "Nothing In His Biography Suggests Experience Leading Large Organizations."** "Two years ago, Pete Hegseth relocated his family from New Jersey, near Fox News headquarters, to a small town outside of Nashville, Tennessee. The red state move was on-brand for the 'Fox & Friends' co-host, who takes his kids shooting, posts pictures wearing anti-President Biden slogans, and emphasizes his Christian faith. Now Hegseth, his wife and their seven children may have to relocate again, this time to Washington, DC. On Tuesday evening, President-elect Donald Trump said Hegseth is his pick for Defense Secretary – a decision that shocked even some of his friends at Fox. Hegseth is a decorated Army veteran who served in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. But nothing in his biography suggests experience leading large organizations." (Brian Stetler, "How Pete Hegseth Went From Fox News Host To Trump's Defense Secretary Pick," [CNN](#), 11/13/24)

Hegseth's Career Overview And Accomplishments:

- **1999:** Graduated As Valedictorian From Forest Lake Area High School In Forest Lake, Minnesota. (Gabriel Sherman, "The Storybook Start—And Bitter End—Of Pete Hegseth's First Marriage," [Vanity Fair](#), 12/3/24)
- **2003:** Graduated From Princeton University With An Undergraduate Degree In Politics. ([Pete Hegseth's Biography](#), Accessed 12/6/24)
- **2004-2005:** Served In Guantanamo Bay (JTF-GTMO) As A Second Lieutenant With His New Jersey Army National Guard Unit. ([Pete Hegseth's Biography](#), Accessed 12/6/24)

- **2005- 2006:** Deployed To Iraq As A First Lieutenant With The 3rd Brigade Of The 101st Airborne Division, Serving As An Infantry Platoon Leader In Baghdad In 2005 And As A Civil-Military Operations Officer In Samarra In 2006. ([Pete Hegseth's Biography](#), Accessed 12/6/24)
- **2007-2010:** Served As Executive Director Of Vets For Freedom. ([Pete Hegseth's Biography](#), Accessed 12/6/24)
- **2012:** Volunteered For Another Tour Of Active Duty And Deployed To Afghanistan With The Minnesota Army National Guard As A Captain Where He Was The Senior Counterinsurgency Instructor At The Counterinsurgency Training Center In Kabul. Upon Completing His Tour Of Duty, Hegseth Was Promoted To The Rank Of Major. ([Pete Hegseth's Biography](#), Accessed 12/6/24; Jane Mayer, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)
- **2012-2015:** Served As CEO Of The Nonprofit, Concerned Veterans For America. ([Pete Hegseth's Biography](#), Accessed 12/6/24)
- **2013:** Earned A Master Of Public Policy From Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School Of Government. ([Pete Hegseth's Biography](#), Accessed 12/6/24)

Awards: Hegseth Holds Two Bronze Stars And A Combat Infantryman's Badge For His Time In Iraq And Afghanistan. "Pete is an Army veteran of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and was also a guard at Guantanamo Bay. He holds two Bronze Stars and a Combat Infantryman's Badge for his time in Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2012, Captain Hegseth deployed to Afghanistan with the Minnesota Army National Guard where he was the senior counterinsurgency instructor at the Counterinsurgency Training Center in Kabul." ([Pete Hegseth's Biography](#), Accessed 12/6/24)

Hegseth Has Been Praised For His Leadership Style By Veterans Groups And Former Colleagues

Veterans On Duty Congratulated Hegseth On His Nomination To Be Secretary Of Defense, Calling Him A "Fierce Advocate For The Warfighter." "Congratulations to Pete Hegseth on his nomination to be the next Secretary of Defense. Seeing a fellow Veteran of the Global War on Terror and fierce advocate for the warfighter be selected to lead the Department of Defense is encouraging. The next generation of veteran is ready to step up to help lead our nation and we're excited to be part of it." (Veterans On Duty, [X](#), 11/13/24)

VIDEO: In December 2024, Two Army Veterans Who Served Under Hegseth Praised His Leadership Style Of Leading From The Front And Placing His Men Ahead Of Himself. "First Sergeant Eric Geressy and Staff Sergeant Cliff Meros, two Army veterans who served under Secretary of Defense nominee Pete Hegseth, joined Will Cain to praise Hegseth's leadership style of leading from the front and placing his men ahead of himself. They, along with hundreds of others who have served alongside Hegseth, have signed a petition backing him as he continues moving forward in the nomination process." ("Army Veterans Who Served Under Pete Hegseth Praise His Leadership," [Fox News' The Will Cain Show](#), 12/11/24)

West Point Admissions

The Media And West Point Military Academy Attempted To Diminish Hegseth's Accomplishments, By Claiming He Did Not Apply To And Was Not Admitted To The Academy, When He Was

In December 2024, ProPublica Looked Into A Writing A Story Claiming Hegseth's Was Not Actually Accepted Into To West Point Academy Military Academy, Despite Saying That He Had Been. (Jesse Eisinger, [X](#), 12/11/24)

- West Point's Public Affairs Allegedly Stated Twice On Record That Hegseth Had Not Even Applied. (Jesse Eisinger, [X](#), 12/11/24)
- Hegseth Provided Proof With His Official Acceptable Letter. (Jesse Eisinger, [X](#), 12/11/24)



Jesse Eisinger
[@eisingerj](#)

...

Hegseth has said that he got into West Point but didn't attend.

We asked West Pt public affairs, which told us twice on the record that he hadn't even applied there.

We reached out. Hegseth's spox gave us his acceptance letter.

We didn't publish a story.

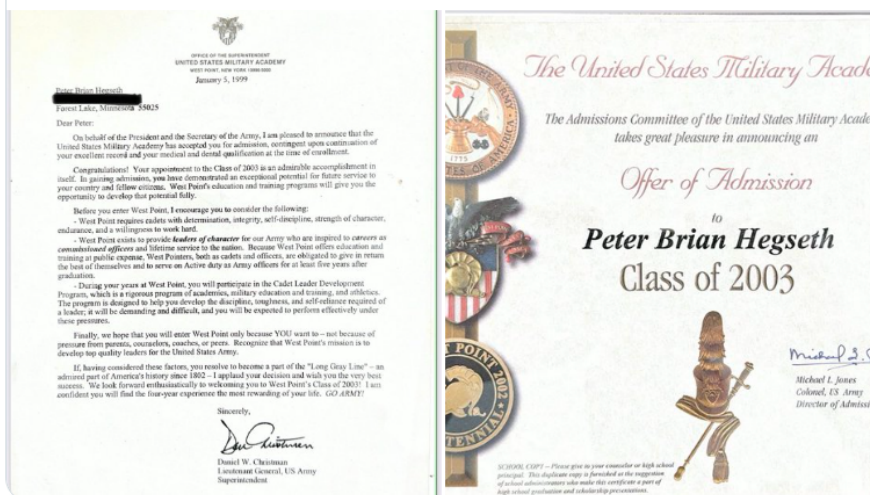
That's journalism.



Pete Hegseth [@PeteHegseth](#) · Dec 11

We understand that ProPublica (the Left Wing hack group) is planning to publish a knowingly false report that I was not accepted to West Point in 1999.

Here's my letter of acceptance signed by West Point Superintendent, Lieutenant General Daniel Christman, US Army.



10:10 AM · Dec 11, 2024 · 6.5M Views

Newsworthy Incidents

VIDEO: In 2015, Hegseth Went Viral And Was Later Sued After He Struck A U.S. Army Master Sergeant In The Arm With A Poor Ax Throw During A 2015 "Fox & Friends" Segment. "Hegseth went viral and was later sued after he struck a U.S. Army master sergeant in the arm with an errant ax throw during a 2015 'Fox & Friends' segment. Video of the incident shows the ax flying over a target and hitting Jeffrey Prosperie, a drummer in West Point's Hellcats field band, who had been invited to the show for the 240th anniversary of the Army's founding. Records show that the lawsuit was discontinued in 2019, and Brandon Cotter, Prosperie's attorney, said in an email Wednesday that 'The parties have resolved the matter and will make no further comment.' Prosperie did not immediately return a message seeking comment. Fox News, which was also named in the lawsuit, called the incident 'unfortunate and completely unintentional,' said it immediately apologized to him and offered medical assistance, which he declined. Prosperie has since returned to the network to perform with the West Point band." (Meg Kinnard, "7 Things To Know About Pete Hegseth, Trump's Defense Secretary Pick," [Associated Press](#), 11/18/24)

TREATMENT OF WOMEN & INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

Hegseth Was Accused Of Sexual Assault In 2017; However, The DA Did Not Bring Charges And Hegseth Strongly Maintains The Encounter Was Consensual

In 2017, Hegseth Secretly Paid A Financial Settlement To A Woman Who Accused Him Of Rape, But Maintained That The Encounter Was Consensual

In 2017, Hegseth Paid A Woman Who Accused Him Of Sexual Assault As Part Of A Nondisclosure Agreement, Though He Maintained That Their Encounter Was Consensual. "Pete Hegseth, President-elect Donald Trump's pick for secretary of defense, paid a woman who accused him of sexual assault as part of a nondisclosure agreement, though he maintained that their encounter was consensual, according to a statement from his lawyer Saturday and other documents obtained by The Washington Post. Hegseth's attorney, Timothy Parlatore, said that Hegseth was 'visibly intoxicated' at the time of the incident, and maintained that police who were contacted a few days after the encounter by the woman concluded that 'the Complainant had been the aggressor in the encounter.' Police have not confirmed that assertion. Hegseth agreed to pay an undisclosed amount to the woman because he feared that revelation of the matter 'would result in his immediate termination from Fox,' where he worked as a host, the statement said." (Michael Kranish, Josh Dawsey And Jonathan O'Connell, " [The Washington Post](#), 11/16/24)

The Accuser Filed A Complaint With The Police Alleging She Was Sexually Assaulted Days After An October 7, 2017 Encounter At A Republican Women's Event In Monterey, California; However, The Local District Attorney Did Not Bring Charges While Police Confirmed That They Investigated The Incident. "The statement came after a detailed memo was sent to the Trump transition team this week by a woman who said she is a friend of the accuser. The memo, a copy of which was obtained by The Post, alleged he raped the then-30-year-old conservative group staffer in his room after drinking at a hotel bar. The person who sent the memo to the transition team did not

respond to requests for comment from The Post. The accuser, whose identity has not been made public, filed a complaint with the police alleging she was sexually assaulted days after the Oct. 7, 2017, encounter in Monterey, California, but the local district attorney did not bring charges. Police confirmed that they investigated the incident. After she threatened litigation in 2020, Hegseth made the payment and she signed the nondisclosure agreement, his attorney said.” (Michael Kranish, Josh Dawsey And Jonathan O’Connell,” [The Washington Post](#), 11/16/24)

After The Woman Threatened Litigation In 2020, Hegseth Made A Payment And She Signed A Nondisclosure Agreement. “The accuser, whose identity has not been made public, filed a complaint with the police alleging she was sexually assaulted days after the Oct. 7, 2017, encounter in Monterey, California, but the local district attorney did not bring charges. Police confirmed that they investigated the incident. After she threatened litigation in 2020, Hegseth made the payment and she signed the nondisclosure agreement, his attorney said.” (Michael Kranish, Josh Dawsey And Jonathan O’Connell,” [The Washington Post](#), 11/16/24)

- **Hegseth Agreed To Pay An Undisclosed Amount To The Woman Because He Feared That Revelation Of The Matter “Would Result In His Immediate Termination From Fox,” Where He Worked As A Host.** “Pete Hegseth, President-elect Donald Trump’s pick for secretary of defense, paid a woman who accused him of sexual assault as part of a nondisclosure agreement, though he maintained that their encounter was consensual, according to a statement from his lawyer Saturday and other documents obtained by The Washington Post. Hegseth’s attorney, Timothy Parlatore, said that Hegseth was ‘visibly intoxicated’ at the time of the incident, and maintained that police who were contacted a few days after the encounter by the woman concluded that ‘the Complainant had been the aggressor in the encounter.’ Police have not confirmed that assertion. Hegseth agreed to pay an undisclosed amount to the woman because he feared that revelation of the matter ‘would result in his immediate termination from Fox,’ where he worked as a host, the statement said.” (Michael Kranish, Josh Dawsey And Jonathan O’Connell,” [The Washington Post](#), 11/16/24)

A Memo About The Incident, Which Was Provided By A Friend Of The Victim, Claimed The Women Did Not Remember Many Details Of The Night After Meeting Hegseth At A Hotel Bar During A California Federation Of Republican Women Conference, But That The Following Day She “Had A Moment Of Hazy Memory Of Being Raped The Night Before, And Had A Panic Attack.” “Hegseth, whose second wife had filed for divorce the previous month, had traveled to Monterey to speak to a California Federation of Republican Women conference. Afterward, according to his lawyer, he went to the hotel bar with a group of attendees. ... According to the memo, Jane Doe “didn’t remember anything until she was in Hegseth’s hotel room and then stumbling to find her hotel room.’ The memo said that her memory of six to nine hours ‘was very hazy,’ and that her husband was searching for her and was relieved when she finally showed up. The following day, the woman returned home and ‘had a moment of hazy memory of being raped the night before, and had a panic attack,’ the memo said. The woman then went to the emergency room, where she received a rape-kit examination that ‘was positive for semen,’ the memo said.” (Michael Kranish, Josh Dawsey And Jonathan O’Connell,” [The Washington Post](#), 11/16/24)

- **The Woman Then Went To The Emergency Room, Where She Received A Rape-Kit Examination That “Was Positive For Semen.”** “The following day, the woman returned home and ‘had a moment of hazy memory of being raped the night before, and had a panic attack,’ the

memo said. The woman then went to the emergency room, where she received a rape-kit examination that 'was positive for semen,' the memo said. The woman gave county authorities a statement about what happened, according to the memo sent to the transition team. Her statement has not been publicly released. The city of Monterey said in a statement Thursday that its police department investigated a sexual assault allegation against Hegseth, with no charges filed. The friend of Jane Doe wrote in the memo that she had been in the presence of the woman at various events for 15 years and had 'never known her to be irresponsible, drunk, or ever of questionable character.'"" (Michael Kranish, Josh Dawsey And Jonathan O'Connell," [The Washington Post](#), 11/16/24)

Hegseth Has Denied Any Claims Of Assault, Stating That The Encounter Was Consensual

According To A Statement Provided By His Lawyer, Hegseth Encountered The Woman At A Party At The Bar And Said That She Went With Him To His Room Afterward. "Hegseth, according to a statement provided by his lawyer, encountered the woman at the party at the bar, and said that she went with him to his room afterward. 'Witnesses stated that Mr. Hegseth was visibly intoxicated but the Complainant was not, as she led him by the arm to his hotel room,'" the statement from Hegseth's lawyer said. He said that video surveillance confirmed the two were walking 'with arms locked together' and that the woman was smiling." (Michael Kranish, Josh Dawsey And Jonathan O'Connell," [The Washington Post](#), 11/16/24)

- **Witnesses Also Stated That Hegseth Was Visibly Intoxicated, But The Complainant Was Not As She Led Him By The Arm To His Hotel Room. Video Surveillance Confirmed The Two Were Walking "With Arms Locked Together" And That The Woman Was Smiling.** "Hegseth, according to a statement provided by his lawyer, encountered the woman at the party at the bar, and said that she went with him to his room afterward. 'Witnesses stated that Mr. Hegseth was visibly intoxicated but the Complainant was not, as she led him by the arm to his hotel room,' the statement from Hegseth's lawyer said. He said that video surveillance confirmed the two were walking 'with arms locked together' and that the woman was smiling. According to Hegseth's lawyer, once the two were in his hotel room, the woman did not leave and was 'the aggressor in initiating sexual activity.'"" (Michael Kranish, Josh Dawsey And Jonathan O'Connell," [The Washington Post](#), 11/16/24)

According To Hegseth's Lawyer, Once The Two Were In His Hotel Room, The Woman Did Not Leave And Was "The Aggressor In Initiating Sexual Activity." "According to Hegseth's lawyer, once the two were in his hotel room, the woman did not leave and was 'the aggressor in initiating sexual activity.' After the encounter, the woman 'expressed concern because she had not gone back to her room,' according to Hegseth's lawyer. Hegseth told police that she planned to tell her husband she had fallen asleep on the couch in another guest's room, according to the statement." (Michael Kranish, Josh Dawsey And Jonathan O'Connell," [The Washington Post](#), 11/16/24)

- **After The Encounter, The Woman "Expressed Concern Because She Had Not Gone Back To Her Room," And Her Husband Was Looking For Her.** "According to Hegseth's lawyer, once the two were in his hotel room, the woman did not leave and was 'the aggressor in initiating sexual activity.' After the encounter, the woman 'expressed concern because she had not gone back to her room,' according to Hegseth's lawyer. Hegseth told police that she planned to tell her husband she had fallen asleep on the couch in another guest's room, according to the statement." (Michael Kranish, Josh Dawsey And Jonathan O'Connell," [The Washington Post](#), 11/16/24)

Hegseth's Lawyer Also Alleged That The Medical Examination Of The Woman "Produced No Evidence That The Sexual Contact Was Nonconsensual" And That A Police Investigation Found No Evidence To Support Charging Hegseth. "Hegseth's lawyer also alleged that the medical examination of the woman 'produced no evidence that the sexual contact was nonconsensual' and that a police investigation found no evidence to support charging Hegseth." (Michael Kranish, Josh Dawsey And Jonathan O'Connell," [The Washington Post](#), 11/16/24)

History of Infidelity

Hegseth Has Been Married Three Times And Was Unfaithful To Both Of His Previous Wives

In 2004, Hegseth Had Married His First Of Three Wives, His High-School Girlfriend From Minnesota, Meredith Schwarz Until 2008 When Schwarz Filed For Divorce After Hegseth Admitted To Multiple Infidelities. "In 2004, Hegseth had married his first of three wives, his high-school girlfriend from Minnesota, Meredith Schwarz. But he often lived apart from her while working in Washington, staying at a pool house owned by the parents of one of her college friends. In 2008, Schwarz filed for divorce after Hegseth admitted to multiple infidelities—his wife later learned that a journalist he'd introduced her to was among those with whom he was having an affair. The couple divorced in 2009." (Jane Mayer, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)

- **Hegseth Had Five Affairs While Married To Schwarz, Including One With Samanta Deering, Who Later Married.** "Schwarz's first impulse was to make the marriage work, two sources said. Although she was crushed by Hegseth's infidelity, she was still in love with him. But sources said that her hope soon faded. First, Schwarz saw charges for a local hotel room on her credit card that she didn't recognize. When she confronted Hegseth, he was evasive. Two sources told me that Schwarz later learned that Hegseth had booked the room for Deering, with whom he had been having an affair. Finally, Hegseth revealed that he had had five affairs while they were married." (Gabriel Sherman, "The Storybook Start—And Bitter End—Of Pete Hegseth's First Marriage," [Vanity Fair](#), 12/3/24)

In 2010, Hegseth Married A Second Time, To Samantha Deering, A Co-Worker At Vets For Freedom And He Admitted In An Essay That Year That He Had Fathered A Child "Out Of Wedlock" Before Marrying Her. "In 2010, he had married a second time, to Samantha Deering, a co-worker at Vets for Freedom. He admitted in an essay that year that he had fathered a child 'out of wedlock' before marrying her, the Times reported. Then, in August, 2017, while still married to Deering, he fathered a daughter with another woman, a producer at Fox, Jennifer Rauchet, whom he eventually married, in 2019." (Jane Mayer, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)

In August 2017, While Still Married To Deering, Hegseth Fathered A Daughter With Another Woman, Fox Producer, Jennifer Rauchet, Whom He Eventually Married In 2019. "In 2010, he had married a second time, to Samantha Deering, a co-worker at Vets for Freedom. He admitted in an essay that year that he had fathered a child 'out of wedlock' before marrying her, the Times reported. Then, in August, 2017, while still married to Deering, he fathered a daughter with another woman, a producer at Fox, Jennifer Rauchet, whom he eventually married, in 2019." (Jane Mayer, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)

In 2020, After Hegseth Sent A Text To His Ex-Wife Samantha Calling Her "Pathetic And Selfish," The Court-Appointed Consultant Said She Wanted To See "An Action Plan From Pete Regarding

Cessation Of Hostile And Degrading Communication To And About Sam.” “The acrimonious divorce from Samantha took 10 months to finalize and led to the appointment of a parenting consultant to help negotiate disputes over dividing time with the children. In the years that followed, Pete and Samantha Hegseth continued to fight over care of the children, according to documents in their divorce record. In 2020, after Mr. Hegseth sent a text to his ex-wife calling her ‘pathetic and selfish,’ the court-appointed consultant said she wanted to see ‘an action plan from Pete regarding cessation of hostile and degrading communication to and about Sam.’ In an affidavit filed with the court, Mr. Hegseth said that he had slipped up, regretted the text, and had not always been as respectful as he could have been. He said, ‘I am committed to learning from my mistakes and communicating with Sam in a positive manner.’” (Sharon LaFraniere And Julie Tate, “Pete Hegseth’s Mother Accused Her Son Of Mistreating Women For Years,” [The New York Times](#), 11/29/24)

- **In An Affidavit Filed With The Court, Hegseth Said That He Had Slipped Up, Regretted The Text, And Had Not Always Been As Respectful As He Could Have Been, Saying “I Am Committed To Learning From My Mistakes And Communicating With Sam In A Positive Manner.”** “In 2020, after Mr. Hegseth sent a text to his ex-wife calling her ‘pathetic and selfish,’ the court-appointed consultant said she wanted to see ‘an action plan from Pete regarding cessation of hostile and degrading communication to and about Sam.’ In an affidavit filed with the court, Mr. Hegseth said that he had slipped up, regretted the text, and had not always been as respectful as he could have been. He said, ‘I am committed to learning from my mistakes and communicating with Sam in a positive manner.’” (Sharon LaFraniere And Julie Tate, “Pete Hegseth’s Mother Accused Her Son Of Mistreating Women For Years,” [The New York Times](#), 11/29/24)

Uniform Code of Military Justice

Reports Of Hegseth’s Infidelity Have Focused Attention On His Character And Leadership, Particularly For A Civilian Overseeing The Military, Where Active-Duty Service Members Can Be Subject To Prosecution For Adultery Under The Uniform Code Of Military Justice. “Questions about Mr. Hegseth’s treatment of women have emerged in the weeks since Mr. Trump chose him, a veteran of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, to lead the Pentagon. The issue is expected to be a subject of scrutiny during Senate confirmation hearings. Reports of his infidelity have focused attention on his character and leadership, particularly for a civilian overseeing the military, where active-duty service members can be subject to prosecution for adultery under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.” (Sharon LaFraniere And Julie Tate, “Pete Hegseth’s Mother Accused Her Son Of Mistreating Women For Years,” [The New York Times](#), 11/29/24)

Hegseth’s Mother Accused Him of Mistreating Women For Years, But Later Said She Regretted Her Statements And Defended Her Son’s Character

As Hegseth Went Through His Second Divorce, His Mother Sent Him An E-Mail Accusing Him Of Being “An Abuser Of Women” Who “Belittles, Lies, Cheats, Sleeps Around, And Uses Women For His Own Power And Ego”

In A 2018 Email To Her Son, Hegseth’s Mother, Penelope, Accused Him Of Routinely Mistreating Women For Years And Displaying A Lack Of Character. “The mother of Pete Hegseth, President-elect Donald J. Trump’s pick for secretary of defense, wrote him an email in 2018 saying he had routinely mistreated women for years and displayed a lack of character. ‘On behalf of all the women

(and I know it's many) you have abused in some way, I say ... get some help and take an honest look at yourself,' Penelope Hegseth wrote, stating that she still loved him. She also wrote: 'I have no respect for any man that belittles, lies, cheats, sleeps around and uses women for his own power and ego. You are that man (and have been for years) and as your mother, it pains me and embarrasses me to say that, but it is the sad, sad truth.'" (Sharon LaFraniere And Julie Tate, "Pete Hegseth's Mother Accused Her Son Of Mistreating Women For Years," [The New York Times](#), 11/29/24)

- **Penelope Hegseth Wrote, "On Behalf Of All The Women (And I Know It's Many) You Have Abused In Some Way, I Say ... Get Some Help And Take An Honest Look At Yourself."** "The mother of Pete Hegseth, President-elect Donald J. Trump's pick for secretary of defense, wrote him an email in 2018 saying he had routinely mistreated women for years and displayed a lack of character. 'On behalf of all the women (and I know it's many) you have abused in some way, I say ... get some help and take an honest look at yourself,' Penelope Hegseth wrote, stating that she still loved him." (Sharon LaFraniere And Julie Tate, "Pete Hegseth's Mother Accused Her Son Of Mistreating Women For Years," [The New York Times](#), 11/29/24)
- **Hegseth's Mother Also Wrote She Had, "No Respect For Any Man That Belittles, Lies, Cheats, Sleeps Around And Uses Women For His Own Power And Ego. You Are That Man (And Have Been For Years) And As Your Mother, It Pains Me And Embarrasses Me To Say That, But It Is The Sad, Sad Truth."** "She also wrote: 'I have no respect for any man that belittles, lies, cheats, sleeps around and uses women for his own power and ego. You are that man (and have been for years) and as your mother, it pains me and embarrasses me to say that, but it is the sad, sad truth.'" (Sharon LaFraniere And Julie Tate, "Pete Hegseth's Mother Accused Her Son Of Mistreating Women For Years," [The New York Times](#), 11/29/24)

The following is the text of the email that Penelope Hegseth sent to her son, Pete Hegseth, on April 30, 2018. One sentence was redacted by The New York Times for privacy reasons.

Son,

I have tried to keep quiet about your character and behavior, but after listening to the way you made Samantha feel today, I cannot stay silent. And as a woman and your mother I feel I must speak out..

You are an abuser of women — that is the ugly truth and I have no respect for any man that belittles, lies, cheats, sleeps around, and uses women for his own power and ego. You are that man (and have been for years) and as your mother, it pains me and embarrasses me to say that, but it is the sad, sad truth.

I am not a saint, far from it.. so don't throw that in my face., but your abuse over the years to women (dishonesty, sleeping around, betrayal, debasing, belittling) needs to be called out.

Sam is a good mother and a good person (under the circumstances that you created) and I know deep down you know that. For you to try to label her as "unstable" for your own advantage is despicable and abusive. Is there any sense of decency left in you? She did not ask for or deserve any of what has come to her by your hand. Neither did Meredith.

I know you think this is one big competition and that we have taken her side... bunk... we are on the side of good and that is not you. (Go ahead and call me self-righteous, I don't care)

Don't you dare run to her and cry foul that we shared with us... that's what babies do. It's time for someone (I wish it was a strong man) to stand up to your abusive behavior and call it out, especially against women

We still love you, but we are broken by your behavior and lack of character. I don't want to write emails like this and never thought I would. If it damages our relationship further, then so be it, but at least I have said my piece. [Redacted]

And yes, we are praying for you (and you don't deserve to know how we are praying, so skip the snarky reply)

I don't want an answer to this... I don't want to debate with you. You twist and abuse everything I say anyway. But... On behalf of all the women (and I know it's many) you have abused in some way, I say... get some help and take an honest look at yourself...

Mom

Penelope Hegseth Later Said She Regretted The Email And Had Apologized To Him

When Asked About The Email In December 2024, Penelope Hegseth Said She Had Sent Her Son An Immediate Follow-Up Email At The Time Apologizing For What She Had Written, Saying She Fired Off The Original Email "In Anger, With Emotion" At A Time When He And His Wife Were Going Through A Contentious Divorce. "Mrs. Hegseth, in a phone interview with The New York Times on Friday, said that she had sent her son an immediate follow-up email at the time apologizing for what she had written. She said she had fired off the original email 'in anger, with emotion' at a time when he and his wife were going through a very difficult divorce. In the interview, she defended her son and disavowed the sentiments she had expressed in the initial email about his character and treatment of women. 'It is not true. It has never been true,' she said. She added: 'I know my son. He is a good father, husband.' She said that publishing the contents of the first email was 'disgusting.'" (Sharon LaFraniere And Julie Tate, "Pete Hegseth's Mother Accused Her Son Of Mistreating Women For Years," [The New York Times](#), 11/29/24)

- **Penelope Hegseth Defended Her Son And Disavowed The Sentiments She Had Expressed In The Initial Email About His Character And Treatment Of Women, Saying, "It Is Not True. It Has Never Been True, ... I Know My Son. He Is A Good Father, Husband."** "Mrs. Hegseth, in a phone interview with The New York Times on Friday, said that she had sent her son an immediate follow-up email at the time apologizing for what she had written. She said she had fired off the original email 'in anger, with emotion' at a time when he and his wife were going through a very difficult divorce. In the interview, she defended her son and disavowed the sentiments she had expressed in the initial email about his character and treatment of women. 'It is not true. It has never been true,' she said. She added: 'I know my son. He is a good father, husband.' She said that publishing the contents of the first email was 'disgusting.'" (Sharon LaFraniere And Julie Tate, "Pete Hegseth's Mother Accused Her Son Of Mistreating Women For Years," [The New York Times](#), 11/29/24)

VIDEO: In December 2024, Penelope Hegseth Went On Fox News To Set The Record Straight About Her Support For Her Son, Saying She Apologized "For Some Of The Words" She Had Written To Him Shortly After She Sent The Email. ("Pete Hegseth's Mother Sets Record Straight: 'He's A Warrior'", [Fox News](#), 12/4/24)

- **VIDEO: Throughout The Interview, Penelope Hegseth Reiterated Her Support For Her Son, Noted How Close Their Family Is, And Called Him A Warrior. She Also Repeatedly Criticized**

Comments On Feminism & Women's Rights

In A 2002 Article In *The Princeton Tory*, The Campus's Conservative Publication, Hegseth Expressed Strident Views Against Feminism And LGBTQ+ Rights. "After 9/11, Hegseth enlisted in Princeton's ROTC program and became a company commander. He also wrote opinion columns for *The Princeton Tory*, the campus's conservative publication. He expressed strident views against feminism and LGBTQ+ rights. 'By advocating government support of the traditional family unit, a return of the acceptability of the 'homemaker' vocation, freedom from oppressive government oversight, moral responsibility, and the revival of religious faith, conservatives provide a working blueprint for a free and prosperous future,' Hegseth [wrote](#) in 2002." (Gabriel Sherman, "The Storybook Start—And Bitter End—Of Pete Hegseth's First Marriage," [Vanity Fair](#), 12/3/24)

- **HEGSETH: "By Advocating Government Support Of The Traditional Family Unit, A Return Of The Acceptability Of The 'Homemaker' Vocation, Freedom From Oppressive Government Oversight, Moral Responsibility, And The Revival Of Religious Faith, Conservatives Provide A Working Blueprint For A Free And Prosperous Future."** (Gabriel Sherman, "The Storybook Start—And Bitter End—Of Pete Hegseth's First Marriage," [Vanity Fair](#), 12/3/24)

Unnamed People Who Claimed They Were Close With Hegseth Said It Was Obvious He Always Wanted To Go Into Politics And That He Was Very Charming, But Noted His Hard-Right Politics, Saying, "He Had Some Regressive Views On Birth Control. His Position Was Basically, If You Got Pregnant It Was Your Fault." "Hegseth and Schwarz were both intensely driven. Before Hegseth began his military service, Schwarz landed an investment banking job at JP Morgan in New York. In 2005, Hegseth volunteered to go to Iraq where he would lead missions in Baghdad and Samarra, a city north of the capital. Hegseth earned two bronze stars, but his unit was also criticized for employing aggressive battlefield tactics, earning the nickname 'Kill Company.' Afterward, Hegseth moved to Washington, DC, to lead Vets for Freedom. The downside was that his marriage remained long distance. One of Schwarz's friends recalled that it was evident that Hegseth wanted to go into politics. 'He's charming,' they said. But Hegseth also displayed his hard-right politics. 'We 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.' Another person close to Hegseth recalled him joking that women shouldn't have the right to vote." (Gabriel Sherman, "The Storybook Start—And Bitter End—Of Pete Hegseth's First Marriage," [Vanity Fair](#), 12/3/24)

Another Person Close To Hegseth Recalled Him Joking That Women Shouldn't Have The Right To Vote. "Hegseth and Schwarz were both intensely driven. Before Hegseth began his military service, Schwarz landed an investment banking job at JP Morgan in New York. In 2005, Hegseth volunteered to go to Iraq where he would lead missions in Baghdad and Samarra, a city north of the capital. Hegseth earned two bronze stars, but his unit was also criticized for employing aggressive battlefield tactics, earning the nickname 'Kill Company.' Afterward, Hegseth moved to Washington, DC, to lead Vets for Freedom. The downside was that his marriage remained long distance. One of Schwarz's friends recalled that it was evident that Hegseth wanted to go into politics. 'He's charming,' they said. But Hegseth also displayed his hard-right politics. 'We 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.' Another person close to Hegseth recalled him joking that women shouldn't have the right to vote." (Gabriel Sherman, "The Storybook Start—And Bitter End—Of Pete Hegseth's First Marriage," [Vanity Fair](#), 12/3/24)

NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP

Hegseth Was Accused Of Financial Mismanagement While Running Veteran Nonprofits; However, He Explains It Was Due To Tactical Errors In Campaign Support, Which Left Them In Debt, "Like Most" Political Campaigns

Vets For Freedom

Hegseth Was Accused Of Financial Mismanagement At Vets For Freedom And Concerned Veterans For America

While Serving As The Leader Of The Nonprofit, Vets For Freedom, The Group Ran Up Enormous Debt And It Was Unable To Pay Its Creditors. "By 2007, Hegseth had become the organization's leader. 'I had no idea what I was doing,' he told the National Guard publication. 'I didn't know if it would work.' In fact, under his leadership, V.F.F. soon ran up enormous debt, and financial records indicate that, by the end of 2008, it was unable to pay its creditors. The group's primary donors became concerned that their money was being wasted on inappropriate expenses; there were rumors of parties that 'could politely be called trysts,' as the former associate of the group put it. The early sympathizer said, 'I was not the first to hear that there was money sloshing around and sexually inappropriate behavior in the workplace.'" (Jane Mayer, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)

- **The Group's Primary Donors Became Concerned That Their Money Was Being Wasted On Inappropriate Expenses After There Were Rumors Of Parties That "Could Politely Be Called Trysts," As The Former Associate Of The Group Put It.** "The group's primary donors became concerned that their money was being wasted on inappropriate expenses; there were rumors of parties that 'could politely be called trysts,' as the former associate of the group put it. The early sympathizer said, 'I was not the first to hear that there was money sloshing around and sexually inappropriate behavior in the workplace.'" (Jane Mayer, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)

The Finances Of VFF Allegedly Grew So Dire That The Group's Donors Devised A Plan To Take Control Away From Hegseth And The Donors' Representatives Hired A Forensic Accountant To Review The Books. "Meanwhile, the finances of V.F.F. grew so dire that the group's donors hatched a plan to take control away from Hegseth. The donors' representatives hired a forensic accountant to review the books. The findings were appalling. In January, 2009, Hegseth sent a letter 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. The group also had run up credit-card debts of as much as seventy-five thousand dollars. Hegseth said that he took full responsibility for the mess, but added that, unless the donors gave him more funds, V.F.F. would have to file for bankruptcy and close down." (Jane Mayer, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)

- In January 2009, Hegseth Sent A Letter To The Donors Admitting That, As Of That Day, The Group Had Less Than A Thousand Dollars In The Bank, \$434,833 In Unpaid Bills, And Had Run Up Credit-Card Debts Of As Much As Seventy-Five Thousand Dollars. “Meanwhile, the finances of V.F.F. grew so dire that the group’s donors hatched a plan to take control away from Hegseth. The donors’ representatives hired a forensic accountant to review the books. The findings were appalling. In January, 2009, Hegseth sent a letter 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. The group also had run up credit-card debts of as much as seventy-five thousand dollars. Hegseth said that he took full responsibility for the mess, but added that, unless the donors gave him more funds, V.F.F. would have to file for bankruptcy and close down.” (Jane Mayer, “Pete Hegseth’s Secret History,” [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)

Margaret Hoover, A Republican Political Commentator And Political Strategist Who Worked As An Adviser To VFF Between 2008 And 2010, Told CNN In 2024 That She Had Grave Concerns About Hegseth’s Ability To Run The Pentagon, The Largest Department In The Federal Government, Given His Mismanagement At VFF. “Margaret Hoover, a Republican political commentator and political strategist who worked as an adviser to V.F.F. between 2008 and 2010, recently told CNN that she had grave concerns about Hegseth’s ability to run the Pentagon, the largest department in the federal government, given his mismanagement at V.F.F. ‘I watched him run an organization very poorly, lose the confidence of donors. The organization ultimately folded and was forced to merge with another organization who individuals felt could run and manage funds on behalf of donors more responsibly than he could. That was my experience with him.’ Hoover stressed that V.F.F. was an exceedingly small organization, with fewer than ten employees, and a budget of between five million and ten million dollars. She told CNN, ‘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.’” (Jane Mayer, “Pete Hegseth’s Secret History,” [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)

- **HOOVER: “I Watched Him Run An Organization Very Poorly, Lose The Confidence Of Donors. The Organization Ultimately Folded And Was Forced To Merge With Another Organization Who Individuals Felt Could Run And Manage Funds On Behalf Of Donors More Responsibly Than He Could. That Was My Experience With Him.”** (Jane Mayer, “Pete Hegseth’s Secret History,” [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)

In A 2024 Op-Ed, Hegseth Blamed The “Tactical Mistake” Of Overspending In The 2008 Presidential Race, Saying They Doubled Down On Political Spending Which Left Them In Debt, Like Most Political Campaigns

In A 2024 Op-Ed, Hegseth Spoke On The Financial Misstatement Claims And Blamed The “Tactical Mistake” Of Overspending In Support Of John McCain During The 2008 Presidential Race, Saying They Doubled Down On Political Spending At The Very End, When Other Groups Pulled Back That Left Them In Debt, Like Most Political Campaigns. “In the 2008 election, we fought hard for John McCain to defeat Barack Obama. We were a bit naive, so we doubled down on our political spending at the very end, when other groups pulled back. It was a tactical mistake, which left us in debt (like most political campaigns). But I stayed with the organization until all the debt was paid off and outstanding contracts negotiated.” (Pete Hegseth: I’ve Faced Fire Before. I Won’t Back Down,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 12/4/24)

Concerned Veterans For America

Hegseth Led Concerned Veterans For America From 2012 To 2016 And Tax Records Show That, During Three Of The Five Years Of His Leadership, The Organization Spent More Money Than It Raised From Donations And Other Means. "Hegseth led Vets for Economic Freedom Trust, operating as Concerned Veterans for America, from 2012 to 2016. Tax records show that, during three of the five years of his leadership, the organization spent more money than it raised from donations and other means. Filings for October 2012 to September 2013 show the organization brought in \$3.8 million but spent \$3.9 million, representing a shortfall of \$130,000. Hegseth's CEO compensation is listed as \$67,500. Filings for October 2013 to September 2014 show revenue swelled \$15.7 million but the organization spent \$16.1 million — including \$8.6 million on advertising and promotion — resulting in a shortfall of \$428,000. Hegseth's salary is listed as \$144,894. Filings for October 2014 to September 2015 show Hegseth's salary grew to \$182,549 and the organization ran a surplus for the first time since 2011, with revenue of \$14.1 million and expenses of just under \$14 million. However, the organization again spent more than it raised the following year, when Hegseth was listed as the outgoing CEO. Filings for October 2015 to September 2016 show the organization raised just under \$16 million but spent \$16.4 million, resulting in a shortfall of \$437,000. " (James LaPorta And Rhona Tarrant, "Hegseth Signed NDA, Received Six-Figure Severance Payment After Leaving Veterans' Group, Sources Say," [CBS News](#), 12/5/24)

MN PAC

In 2012, Hegseth Formed MN PAC To Help Like-Minded Candidates, But A Third Of The Funds Were Spent On Parties For His Family And Friends, And Less Than Half Was Spent On Candidates. "By 2012, Hegseth had departed from what remained of V.F.F., and had launched an abortive bid for the Senate from Minnesota, where he was a captain in the state's National Guard. He then volunteered for another tour of active duty, this time in Afghanistan, to train Afghan security forces. Upon completing his tour of duty, he was promoted to the rank of major. In 2012, Hegseth formed a political-action committee, MN PAC, to help like-minded candidates, but, according to a report by American Public Media, a third of the funds in Hegseth's PAC was spent on parties for his family and friends, and less than half was spent on candidates." (Jane Mayer, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)

Despite Claims Of Mismanagement From Mostly Anonymous Sources, Concerned Veterans For America Was Extremely Successful Under Hegseth's Leadership

As CEO Of Concerned Veterans For America, Hegseth Built "The Largest Conservative Veterans Advocacy Organization In America And Led The Charge For Real Reform At The Department Of Veterans Affairs"

As CEO Of Concerned Veterans For America From 2012 To 2015, Hegseth Built "The Largest Conservative Veterans Advocacy Organization In America And Led The Charge For Real Reform At The Department Of Veterans Affairs." "Pete Hegseth is the former CEO of Concerned Veterans for America (2012-2015), where he built the largest conservative veterans advocacy organization in America and led the charge for real reform at the Department of Veterans Affairs. Before that, Pete

was the Executive Director of Vets for Freedom (2007-2010), leading the 'ground truth' charge for success on the battlefield in Iraq and Afghanistan." (A Step Forward Overcoming Obstacles With Speaker Pete Hegseth," [The Parkinson's Association Of SWFL](#), 3/30/23)

Hegseth's Successor Praised His Leadership, Credited Him With Helping Pass Historic Reforms To The VA, And Said, "Because Of Pete Hegseth, Concerned Veterans For America Was One Of The Most Impactful Veterans Organizations In Modern Day History"

VIDEO: On December 12, 2024, Mark Lucas, Who Runs Article 3 Project, Served With Hegseth In The 34th Infantry Division, And Was His Successor At Concerned Veterans For America, Praised Hegseth And Criticized Anonymous Sources Who Were Attempting To Distort His Leadership Record At CVA. MARK LUCAS: "I've known Pete Hegseth for over a decade. We served together in the 34th Infantry Division, it's the famous red bull division. Our motto is 'attack, attack, attack.' And Pete was also my predecessor at Concerned Veterans for America and there's a *New Yorker* article that came out that was sourced anonymously that accused Pete of all these bad actions and you came away reading the article thinking that Concerned Veterans for America was a trainwreck. I can tell you it was the complete opposite. I inherited a world class organization, I kept his leadership team that was incredible, I used his strategy to help me as the executive director of Concerned Veterans for America to brief president trump in the Roosevelt room." (Mark Lucas, [X](#), 12/12/24) MINUTE 0:00-0:47

VIDEO: Lucas Said He "Inherited A World Class Organization", Kept Hegseth's "Incredible" Leadership Team, And Used His Strategy As Executive Director Of Concerned Veterans For America To Help Brief President Trump In 2017. MARK LUCAS: "I've known Pete Hegseth for over a decade. We served together in the 34th Infantry Division, it's the famous red bull division. Our motto is 'attack, attack, attack.' And Pete was also my predecessor at Concerned Veterans for America and there's a *New Yorker* article that came out that was sourced anonymously that accused Pete of all these bad actions and you came away reading the article thinking that Concerned Veterans for America was a trainwreck. I can tell you it was the complete opposite. I inherited a world class organization, I kept his leadership team that was incredible, I used his strategy to help me as the executive director of Concerned Veterans for America to brief President Trump in the Roosevelt Room." (0:00-0:47)

VIDEO: Lucas Praised Hegseth's Strategy To Bring Accountability To The VA And Choice In Veteran Healthcare For Helping To Pass Two Of The Most Historic Reforms In The History Of The VA, The VA Accountability And Whistleblower Protection Act Of 2017 And The Mission Act. MARK LUCAS: "It was Pete's strategy going for years back that said we need to bring accountability to the VA, we also need to bring choice in veteran healthcare. And when I told President Trump that Pete was a friend and my predecessor, his eyes lit up and he said 'You know Pete?' I love Pete, he's my friend and I want to hire him but my friends say we need to keep him at Fox.' So that helped me out immensely as we moved forward early on in the Trump Administration. In 2017, we helped pass two of the most historic reforms in the history of the VA, the VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017 and then The Mission Act. So because of Pete Hegseth, Concerned Veterans for America was one of the most impactful veterans organizations in modern day history." (Mark Lucas, [X](#), 12/12/24) MINUTE 0:47-1:32

VIDEO: In December 2024, Lucas Said, "Because Of Pete Hegseth, Concerned Veterans For America Was One Of The Most Impactful Veterans Organizations In Modern Day History." MARK LUCAS: "It was Pete's strategy going for years back that said we need to bring accountability to the VA, we also need to bring choice in veteran healthcare. And when I told President Trump that Pete was a friend and my processor, his eyes lit up and he said 'You know Pete?' I love Pete, he's my friend and I want to hire him but my friends say we need to keep him at Fox.' So that helped me out immensely as we moved forward early on in the Trump Administration. In 2017, we helped pass two of the most historic reforms in the history of the VA, the VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017 and then The Mission Act. So because of Pete Hegseth, Concerned Veterans for America was one of the most impactful veterans organizations in modern day history." (Mark Lucas, [X](#), 12/12/24) MINUTE 0:47-1:32

Under Hegseth's Leadership, Concerned Veterans For America Helped Create Real Change At The VA And Held Washington Democrats Accountable

While Leading Concerned Veterans For America, The Group Fought To Fix The Broken Department Of Veterans Affairs Healthcare System And Was The Original Nexus Of The VA Accountability And VA Healthcare Choice Legislation, Which Improved The Lives Of Countless Veterans. "When I came back from that battlefield, I took the helm of another veterans organization, Concerned Veterans for America. My mission at home continued. This time we fought to fix our broken Department of Veterans Affairs healthcare system, and we made great progress. Our group was the original nexus of the VA accountability and VA healthcare choice legislation that improved the lives of countless veterans. Few groups in Washington ever accomplish as much as we did. We fought entrenched interests and mobilized veterans and patriotic Americans across the country. We had hundreds of employees and thousands of volunteers—yet based on the anonymous accusations of a few disgruntled employees, the legacy media has made it sound as if we ran a college frat house. That's just untrue. What is true is that as our organization grew, there was an internal difference of opinion about its future. I wanted to engage in foreign policy; our donors didn't. Eventually, the organization and I parted ways. The feeling was mutual, and the organization's leadership wrote me a glowing letter when I left." (Pete Hegseth: I've Faced Fire Before. I Won't Back Down," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 12/4/24)

In October 2015, Concerned Veterans For America Launched A Six-Figure Digital And Mail Ad Campaign Targeting Senate Democrats, Asking The Lawmakers To Support The Veterans Affairs Accountability Act, Which Would Make It Easier To Fire Department Of Veterans Affairs Staffers. "Concerned Veterans for America, the Koch network nonprofit, is launching a six-figure digital and mail ad campaign targeting Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO) as well as three Democrats up for reelection in 2018: Sens. Joe Donnelly (D-IN), Bob Casey (D-PA), and Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND). The grim-looking ads ask the lawmakers to support the Veterans Affairs Accountability Act, a bill that would make it easier to fire Department of Veterans Affairs staffers. Democrats and unions have fought the bill, which the House passed in July and which President Barack Obama has threatened to veto." (Lisa Hagen, "Concerned Veterans For America Launches Ads Attacking Senate Democrats," *National Journal*, 10/20/15)

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In 2014, Concerned Veterans For America Launched A \$770K Ad Buy In Arkansas, Denver, And Throughout The Country, Attacking Congress For Failing To Address The Nation’s Dangerous \$17 Trillion Debt And Instead Cutting Pensions For Military Retirees. “New ads produced by Concerned Veterans for America (CVA) blasts Congress for failing to address the nation’s dangerous \$17 trillion debt and instead cutting pensions for military retirees. The 30-second ads—totaling \$770,136 and entitled ‘Priorities’—will run statewide on TV and radio in Arkansas, on radio in Denver, Colorado, and online throughout the country for three weeks. The ads praise Rep. Tom Cotton (AR-4) and Rep. Mike Coffman (CO-6) for their principled stand in voting against the most recent budget deal. Rep. Cotton, an Army veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan, and Rep. Coffman, an Army veteran of Iraq, both deserve praise for opposing a deal that neglects meaningful spending reforms and instead cuts pensions for military retirees. In addition to these specific ads, a national ad online will run entitled #CutDebtNotVets. (Concerned Veterans For America, “Veterans \$770K Ad Buy Highlights Budget Failures And Military Pension Cuts,” [Press Release](#), 1/23/14)

- **Hegseth Spoke About The Ad Campaign Saying, “While Washington Politicians Are Patting Themselves On The Back For Completing And Passing A Budget For The First Time In Five Years, There's Little In This Massive Spending Package For Americans To Celebrate.”** “‘While Washington politicians are patting themselves on the back for completing and passing a budget for the first time in five years, there's little in this massive spending package for Americans to celebrate,’ said Pete Hegseth , CEO of CVA. ‘Washington is driving us down the path of fiscal ruin by increasing spending and failing to make substantive reforms to entitlement programs and other big ticket spending categories.’” (Concerned Veterans For America, “Veterans \$770K Ad Buy Highlights Budget Failures And Military Pension Cuts,” [Press Release](#), 1/23/14)
- **HEGSETH: “Washington Is Driving Us Down The Path Of Fiscal Ruin By Increasing Spending And Failing To Make Substantive Reforms To Entitlement Programs And Other Big Ticket Spending Categories.”** “‘While Washington politicians are patting themselves on the back for completing and passing a budget for the first time in five years, there's little in this massive spending package for Americans to celebrate,’ said Pete Hegseth , CEO of CVA. ‘Washington is driving us down the path of fiscal ruin by increasing spending and failing to make substantive reforms to entitlement programs and other big ticket spending categories.’” (Concerned Veterans For America, “Veterans \$770K Ad Buy Highlights Budget Failures And Military Pension Cuts,” [Press Release](#), 1/23/14)

In 2013, Concerned Veterans For America Sponsored A 25-Day “Defend Freedom” Bus Tour, Where A Group Of Decorated Military Veterans Traveled Coast To Coast And Provided A Platform For Veterans To Tell Their Stories, Honor Service, And Explore Ways To Continue Fighting For Freedom At Home. “A group of decorated military veterans will embark on a 25-day bus tour beginning October 4, traveling from coast to coast on the 'Defend Freedom' Tour. According to a release, the tour, spanning most of the month of October, will provide a platform for veterans to tell their stories, honor service and explore ways to continue fighting for freedom here at

home. The bus tour includes dozens of stops in Nevada, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Louisiana, Florida, Georgia, Ohio, Kentucky, Virginia and North Carolina. Over 750 people (and growing) have already RSVP'd for the October 4 kick-off event in Las Vegas. The tour, sponsored by Concerned Veterans for America (CVA) - a national, non-profit organization of veterans, military family members, and patriotic Americans - will take messages of service, freedom and the American dream from coast to coast. A high-profile list of decorated veterans have joined the tour, the group said."

("Concerned Veterans For America Schedules 'Defend Freedom' Tour," Press Release, 10/1/13)

- **At The Time, Hegseth Said "Our Great Nation Is Failing To Live Up To Its Potential, And In Particular, Failing In Its Commitment To Our Veterans," So The Group Was Working To Take Their Messages To The People "To Help Build Our Activist Base So That Veterans, Their Families And Friends Will Join Us To Promote The Values That Will Keep This Nation Strong, Fiscally Sound, Proud And Responsible."** "'Unfortunately, our great nation is failing to live up to its potential, and in particular, failing in its commitment to our veterans,' said Pete Hegseth, CEO of CVA. 'That's why we're taking our messages to the people, to help build our activist base so that veterans, their families and friends will join us to promote the values that will keep this nation strong, fiscally sound, proud and responsible.' 'We expect courage and accountability from our leaders,' said Hegseth. 'To maintain our strength as a country we need a powerful, consistent force advocating for policies that lead to a strong national defense, free markets, fiscal discipline, and a government that respects the freedoms America's veterans and their families sacrificed so much to defend.' 'That's why veterans are coming forward now: They know how to make their voices heard, and they understand what it means to be a part of something larger than themselves.'"

("Concerned Veterans For America Schedules 'Defend Freedom' Tour," Press Release, 10/1/13)

In 2014, Concerned Veterans For America Again Sponsored A 10-City "Defend Freedom Summer Tour" Where They Encouraged People To Get Politically Active And Help Steer America Back Onto A More Conservative Path. "Slamming President Barack Obama and evoking nostalgia for Ronald Reagan, a trio of speakers urged military veterans Friday night to get politically active and help steer America back onto a more conservative path. The event was the kickoff of a 10-city 'Defend Freedom Summer Tour' organized by Concerned Veterans for America, based in Arlington. On its website, the group says it advocates policies that advance free markets, limited government and fiscal restraint."

("Concerned Veterans For America Kicks Off 10-City Tour," *The Virginian-Pilot*, 5/25/14)

- **On The Tour, Hegseth Highlighted A Series Of Scandals That Had Tainted The Obama Administration, Including The Substandard Care At Veterans Affairs Health Centers And Protecting Government Bureaucracy.** "Pete Hegseth, the group's CEO and a Fox News contributor, ticked off what he called a series of scandals that have tainted the Obama administration, including the substandard care at Veterans Affairs health centers. 'When you have a bureaucracy more concerned about protecting leaders who are covering up deaths of veterans waiting on secret lists - that's more important than providing timely care - you know you have a government and a country whose priorities are off the rails,' Hegseth told an enthusiastic audience of about 100, many of them veterans, at the Granby Theater. He also railed against Obama's health care law, the 'cover-up' of the 2012 terrorist attack that killed four Americans in Benghazi, Libya, and the targeting of conservative organizations by the Internal Revenue Service."

("Concerned Veterans For America Kicks Off 10-City Tour," *The Virginian-Pilot*, 5/25/14)

- **Hegseth Also Railed Against Obama's Health Care Law, The Cover-Up Of The 2012 Terrorist Attack That Killed Four Americans In Benghazi, And The Targeting Of Conservative Organizations By The Internal Revenue Service.** "Pete Hegseth, the group's CEO and a Fox News contributor, ticked off what he called a series of scandals that have tainted the Obama administration, including the substandard care at Veterans Affairs health centers. 'When you have a bureaucracy more concerned about protecting leaders who are covering up deaths of veterans waiting on secret lists - that's more important than providing timely care - you know you have a government and a country whose priorities are off the rails,' Hegseth told an enthusiastic audience of about 100, many of them veterans, at the Granby Theater. He also railed against Obama's health care law, the 'cover-up' of the 2012 terrorist attack that killed four Americans in Benghazi, Libya, and the targeting of conservative organizations by the Internal Revenue Service." ("Concerned Veterans For America Kicks Off 10-City Tour," *The Virginian-Pilot*, 5/25/14)

Anonymous Sources And Former Employees Claim Hegseth Was Forced To Step Down From His Leadership Roles; However, Official Statements From The Group Disputes That Claim And Shows He Left On Mutual Terms

Several Anonymous Sources And Former Employees At The Veteran Nonprofits Hegseth Ran Have Accused Him Of Sexual Impropriety, Personal Misconduct, And Claimed He Was Forced To Step Down From Both Roles

A December 2024 Expose On Hegseth Claimed Documents And Accounts Of Former Colleagues Indicated That Hegseth Was Forced To Step Down By Both Of The Two Nonprofit Advocacy Groups That He Ran, Veterans For Freedom And Concerned Veterans For America, In The Face Of "Serious Allegations Of Financial Mismanagement, Sexual Impropriety, And Personal Misconduct." "But Hegseth's record before becoming a full-time Fox News TV host, in 2017, raises additional questions about his suitability to run the world's largest and most lethal military force. A trail of documents, corroborated by the accounts of former colleagues, indicates that Hegseth was forced to step down by both of the two nonprofit advocacy groups that he ran—Veterans for Freedom and Concerned Veterans for America—in the face of serious allegations of financial mismanagement, sexual impropriety, and personal misconduct." (Jane Mayer, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)

- **A Previously Undisclosed Whistle-Blower Report On Hegseth's Tenure As The President Of Concerned Veterans For America, From 2013 Until 2016, Described Him As Being Repeatedly Intoxicated While Acting In His Official Capacity, To The Point Of Needing To Be Carried Out Of The Organization's Events.** "A previously undisclosed whistle-blower report on Hegseth's tenure as the president of Concerned Veterans for America, from 2013 until 2016, describes him as being repeatedly intoxicated while acting in his official capacity—to the point of needing to be carried out of the organization's events." (Jane Mayer, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)
- **The Detailed Seven-Page Report, Which Was Compiled By Multiple Former CVA Employees And Sent To The Organization's Senior Management In February 2015, Stated That, At One Point, Hegseth Had To Be Restrained While Drunk From Joining The Dancers On The Stage Of A Louisiana Strip Club, Where He Had Brought His Team.** "A previously undisclosed

whistle-blower report on Hegseth's tenure as the president of Concerned Veterans for America, from 2013 until 2016, describes him as being repeatedly intoxicated while acting in his official capacity—to the point of needing to be carried out of the organization's events. The detailed seven-page report—which was compiled by multiple former C.V.A. employees and sent to the organization's senior management in February, 2015—states that, at one point, Hegseth had to be restrained while drunk from joining the dancers on the stage of a Louisiana strip club, where he had brought his team." (Jane Mayer, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)

- **The Report Also Stated That Hegseth, Who Was Married At The Time, And Other Members Of His Management Team Sexually Pursued The Organization's Female Staffers, Whom They Divided Into Two Groups, The "Party Girls" And The "Not Party Girls."** "The report also says that Hegseth, who was married at the time, and other members of his management team sexually pursued the organization's female staffers, whom they divided into two groups—the 'party girls' and the 'not party girls.' In addition, the report asserts that, under Hegseth's leadership, the organization became a hostile workplace that ignored serious accusations of impropriety, including an allegation made by a female employee that another employee on Hegseth's staff had attempted to sexually assault her at the Louisiana strip club." (Jane Mayer, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)

In Addition, The Report Asserted That, Under Hegseth's Leadership, The Organization Became A Hostile Workplace That Ignored Serious Accusations Of Impropriety, Including An Allegation Made By A Female Employee That Another Employee On Hegseth's Staff Had Attempted To Sexually Assault Her At The Louisiana Strip Club. "The report also says that Hegseth, who was married at the time, and other members of his management team sexually pursued the organization's female staffers, whom they divided into two groups—the 'party girls' and the 'not party girls.' In addition, the report asserts that, under Hegseth's leadership, the organization became a hostile workplace that ignored serious accusations of impropriety, including an allegation made by a female employee that another employee on Hegseth's staff had attempted to sexually assault her at the Louisiana strip club." (Jane Mayer, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)

A December 2024 New Yorker Piece Claimed In January 2016, Hegseth "Quietly Resigned" From Concerned Veterans For America, Under Pressure But Had No Other Job Lined Up At The Time And Gave No Explanation For His Departure. "In January, 2016, Hegseth resigned from Concerned Veterans for America, under pressure. An account in the Military Times said that Hegseth had 'quietly resigned,' in a decision that was 'mutual' with the organization, amid 'rumors of a rift between the former C.E.O. and the group's financial backers.' Hegseth, who had no other job lined up at the time, gave no explanation for his departure, other than saying, 'Sometimes it just makes sense to make a transition.' C.V.A., for its part, released a statement saying that it thanked Hegseth 'for his many contributions' and wished him well. But, according to three knowledgeable sources, one of whom contributed to the whistle-blower report, Hegseth was forced to step down from the organization in part because of concerns about his mismanagement and abuse of alcohol on the job." (Jane Mayer, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)

- **According To Three Sources, One Of Whom Contributed To The Whistle-Blower Report, Hegseth Was Forced To Step Down From The Organization In Part Because Of Concerns About His Mismanagement And Abuse Of Alcohol On The Job.** "In January, 2016, Hegseth

resigned from Concerned Veterans for America, under pressure. An account in the Military Times said that Hegseth had 'quietly resigned,' in a decision that was 'mutual' with the organization, amid 'rumors of a rift between the former C.E.O. and the group's financial backers.' Hegseth, who had no other job lined up at the time, gave no explanation for his departure, other than saying, 'Sometimes it just makes sense to make a transition.' C.V.A., for its part, released a statement saying that it thanked Hegseth 'for his many contributions' and wished him well. But, according to three knowledgeable sources, one of whom contributed to the whistle-blower report, Hegseth was forced to step down from the organization in part because of concerns about his mismanagement and abuse of alcohol on the job." (Jane Mayer, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)

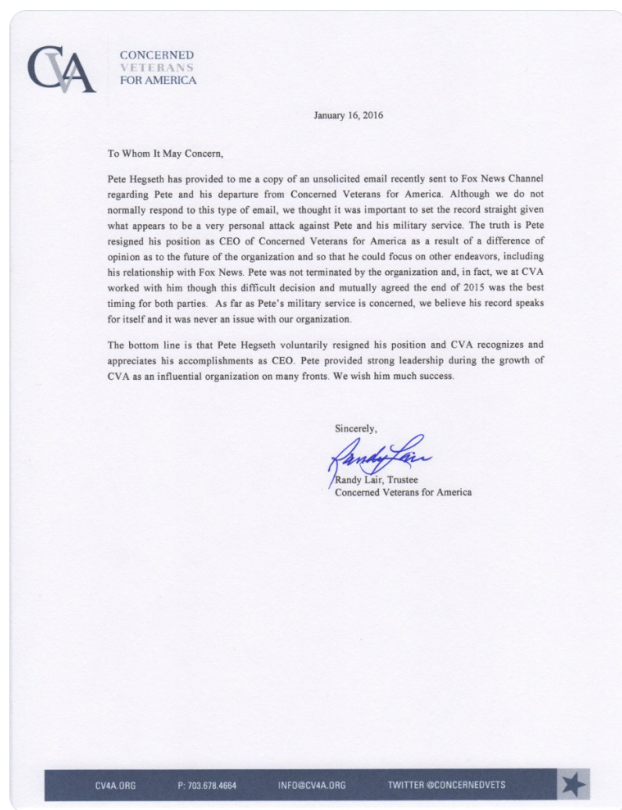
However, Official Documents And Statements From Leaders Of Groups Contradict The Anonymous Accusations, And Instead Show That Hegseth Left His Posts Voluntarily

A 2016 Letter From The Trustee Of Concerned Veterans For America States That Hegseth Resigned From His Position As CEO Of The Group As A Result Of A Difference Of Opinion As To The Future Of The Organization And So That He Could Focus On Other Endeavors, Including His Relationship With Fox News. (Trustee Randy Lair, [Concerned Veterans For America Letter](#), 1/16/16)



Josh Christenson ✓
@jchristenson_

Scoop: The trustee of the veterans advocacy group where Pete Hegseth served as president denied in 2016 that the current defense secretary-designee was forced out of the position due to drinking and other misconduct, directly contradicting whistleblowers who spoke with the New Yorker:



9:42 AM · Dec 4, 2024 · 1.2M Views

Hegseth Has Strongly Denied The Allegations And Criticized Anonymous Sources And Disgruntled Past Employees For The Baseless Claims

Hegseth Has Strongly Denied The Allegations And Criticized Anonymous Sources And Disgruntled Past Employees For The Baseless Claims. "When I came back from that battlefield, I took the helm of another veterans organization, Concerned Veterans for America. My mission at home continued. This time we fought to fix our broken Department of Veterans Affairs healthcare system, and we made great progress. Our group was the original nexus of the VA accountability and VA healthcare choice legislation that improved the lives of countless veterans. Few groups in Washington ever accomplish as much as we did. We fought entrenched interests and mobilized veterans and patriotic Americans across the country. We had hundreds of employees and thousands of volunteers—yet based on the anonymous accusations of a few disgruntled employees, the legacy media has made it sound as if we ran a college frat house. That's just untrue." (Op-Ed "Pete Hegseth: I've Faced Fire Before. I Won't Back Down," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 12/4/24)

Hegseth Was Also Criticized For Receiving A Six-Figure Severance Payment And Signing A Non-Disclosure Agreement When He Left Concerned Veterans Of America; However, His Attorney Noted That The Group Makes Everyone Who Leaves Sign An NDA, Not Just Hegseth. "Pete Hegseth, President-elect Donald Trump's embattled pick for secretary of defense, received a six-figure severance payment and signed a non-disclosure agreement when he exited the organization Concerned Veterans of America. The payment came amid allegations of financial mismanagement, repeated incidents of intoxication and sexual impropriety, as well as dissension among its leaders over Hegseth's foreign policy views. The Army veteran turned Fox News host signed a non-disclosure agreement when he stepped down as CEO in January 2016, two sources associated with Concerned Veterans of America told CBS News, with one source saying the agreement included a financial payout. The CVA sources spoke to CBS News under conditions of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss legally-binding contracts, while also fearing professional reprisal. ... Hegseth's attorney, Timothy Parlatore, told CBS News on Wednesday evening the payment to his client by Concerned Veterans of America was a 'standard severance package.' 'They make EVERYONE who leaves CVA sign an NDA. It was standard for all employees. Not just Pete,' Parlatore said." (James LaPorta And Rhona Tarrant, "Hegseth Signed NDA, Received Six-Figure Severance Payment After Leaving Veterans' Group, Sources Say," [CBS News](#), 12/5/24)

- **CBS News Noted That Severance Payments And Non-Disclosure Agreements For Outgoing CEOs Are Common.** "Experts consulted by CBS News said severance payments and non-disclosure agreements for outgoing CEOs are common. Such payments are issued for a number of reasons, including to maintain professional relationships, to work as an adviser to an incoming CEO, or to provide a soft landing for departing leaders, they said." (James LaPorta And Rhona Tarrant, "Hegseth Signed NDA, Received Six-Figure Severance Payment After Leaving Veterans' Group, Sources Say," [CBS News](#), 12/5/24)

REPUTATION AT FOX NEWS

Hegseth Has Been Accused Of Drinking On The Job; However, Countless Colleagues Who Have Worked Closely With Him Called The Claims Ridiculous And Untrue

A Handful Of Current And Former Fox Employees Claimed Hegseth Drank In Ways That Concerned His Co-Workers; However, The Only Individuals Who Were Willing To Go On Record Were Colleagues Who Disputed Those Claims And Testified To His Character

A Former Colleague Of Hegseth's At Fox Called Him, "A Kind Of What-Happens-In-Vegas-Stays-In-Vegas Kind Of Attitude, While His Wife And Kids Were In Minnesota" Adding, "He Was A Huge Drinker. I Can't Say If He Had A Problem, But He Was Very Handsy With Women, Too. I've Certainly Seen Him Drunk." "A former colleague of Hegseth's at Fox recalled of him, 'He had a kind of what-happens-in-Vegas-stays-in-Vegas kind of attitude, while his wife and kids were in Minnesota.' The colleague added, 'He was a huge drinker. I can't say if he had a problem, but he was very handsy with women, too. I've certainly seen him drunk.'" (Jane Mayer, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)

In December 2024, 10 Current And Former Fox Employees Claimed Hegseth Drank In Ways That Concerned His Co-Workers, Two Of Which Claimed That On More Than A Dozen Occasions During Hegseth's Time As A Co-Host Of "Fox & Friends Weekend," Which Began In 2017, They Smelled Alcohol On Him Before He Went On Air. "Pete Hegseth, President-elect Donald Trump's pick for defense secretary, drank in ways that concerned his colleagues at Fox News, according to 10 current and former Fox employees who spoke with NBC News. Two of those people said that on more than a dozen occasions during Hegseth's time as a co-host of 'Fox & Friends Weekend,' which began in 2017, they smelled alcohol on him before he went on air. Those same two people, plus another, said that during his time there he appeared on television after they'd heard him talk about being hungover as he was getting ready or on set." (Chloe Melas, Courtney Kube And Sarah Fitzpatrick, "Pete Hegseth's Drinking Worried Colleagues At Fox News, Sources Tell NBC News," [NBC News](#), 12/3/24)

- One Source Claimed They Smelled Alcohol On Him As Recently As November 2024 And Heard Him Complain About Being Hungover This Fall, And Added, "Everyone Would Be Talking About It Behind The Scenes Before He Went On The Air." "One of the sources said they smelled alcohol on him as recently as last month and heard him complain about being hungover this fall. None of the sources with whom NBC News has spoken could recall an instance when Hegseth missed a scheduled appearance because he'd been drinking. 'Everyone would be talking about it behind the scenes before he went on the air,' one of the former Fox employees said." (Chloe Melas, Courtney Kube And Sarah Fitzpatrick, "Pete Hegseth's Drinking Worried Colleagues At Fox News, Sources Tell NBC News," [NBC News](#), 12/3/24)

In Response, Dozens Of Colleagues, Co-Hosts, Guests, And Fellow Fox News Personalities Have Spoken Out In Support Of Hegseth On The Record, Disputing The Claims That He Is Unprofessional Or Drinks On The Job. (Will Cain, [X](#), 12/3/24)



Will Cain ✓
@willcain

...

10 “anonymous sources” for @NBCNews.

Here's your on the record statements from people who worked with @PeteHegseth. I know there's MANY more of you. Drop it here. 📢
@dbongino @NBSaphierMD @Johnny_Joey @kylenabecker



👤 Dan Bongino

9:03 PM · Dec 3, 2024 · 3.1M Views



Dan Bongino ✓
@dbongino

Worked with Pete for years. This is absolute BULLSHIT.



Yashar Ali 🇲🇵 ✓ @yashar · 3h
NEW

Ten current and former Fox employees say that Pete Hegseth, Trump's pick for defense secretary, drank in ways that concerned his co-workers.

Two of those people said that on more than a dozen occasions during Hegseth's time as a co-host of "Fox & Friends Weekend," which Show



Joey Jones ✓
@Johnny_Joey

Subscribe

I don't drink. I'm disgusted by the smell of alcohol on someone's breath. I've never EVER seen Pete drink like that, and have never smelled alcohol on his breath at work. These hit pieces are getting laughable.



Yashar Ali 🇲🇵 ✓ @yashar · 3h
NEW

Ten current and former Fox employees say that Pete Hegseth, Trump's pick for defense secretary, drank in ways that concerned his co-workers.

Two of those people said that on more than a dozen occasions during Hegseth's time as a co-host of "Fox & Friends Weekend," which Show



🔄 Dan Bongino reposted



Nicole Saphier, MD ✓
@NBSaphierMD

Follow

I have routinely sat on the couch with [@PeteHegseth](#) for 8 years. Not once did I suspect he had consumed anything other than an egg sandwich and coffee before going on air.



Clay Travis ✓
@ClayTravis

Add me to the list. It's ridiculous bullshit.

9:04 PM · 12/3/24 · 8K Views



William Case ✓
@casew9610

Follow back

I worked with Pete Hegseth [@PeteHegseth](#) for YEARS --on set, in the control room, in the newsroom, in taxis, on boats, on location. This is all LOLOL.

The F&F staff all LOVED Pete, and women of every rank thought he was just the greatest thing (oh the stories). Also:

1. I know the NBC producers anonymously quoted here and they're 100% cowards. They're also loaded with medications and likely functioning alcohols themselves.
2. I have photos of F&F weekend staff coming into work hungover, on the floor, by their desks. They were too drunk to notice Pete most days.
3. I don't let problematic alcoholics hold my children 🙅



Sara A. Carter ✓
@SaraCarterDC

Subscribe

I have known [@PeteHegseth](#) since we were both at The Blaze way back when and as a contributor for Fox since 2017, I have never once seen this type of reported lies or behavior. He's always been a gentleman and great guy!



Yashar Ali 🐘 ✓ @yashar · 5h

NEW

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Two of those people said that on more than a dozen occasions during Hegseth's time as a co-host of "Fox & Friends Weekend," which Show more





Jon Nicosia ✓
@NewsPolitics

Follow back

I have covered the media for 15 years. If [@PeteHegseth](#) was as drunk on set, etc., as people are saying, it would've been gossip everywhere. I was Managing Editor at [@Mediaite](#) when the Roger Ailes stuff went down. That place (Fox) talks/leaks a LOT. Until tonight. Not a word or post on the current media gossip sites about the smell of booze, nothing. The media business is brutal. Getting rid of him if he was drinking opens up another prime spot for the next star in line to take a seat on the couch. It's just that simple. Someone would've leaked it far sooner. This is a hit piece and garbage, nothing more.



Kyle Becker ✓
@kylenabecker

Subscribe

I see [@PeteHegseth](#) numerous times while working at Fox News. Never got the impression he was ever drunk.

No bloodshot eyes. No slurred speech. No disheveled appearance. No wobbly gait. Nothing.

I'm also calling bullshit.

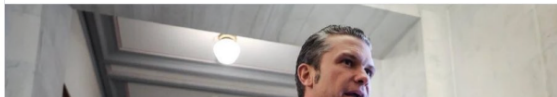


Yashar Ali 🇺🇸 @yashar · 3h

NEW

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Two of those people said that on more than a dozen occasions during Hegseth's time as a co-host of "Fox & Friends Weekend," which Show more



Rachel Campos-Duffy ✓
@RCamposDuffy

...

The losers at [@NBCNews](#) never reached out to me either. [@willcain](#) is right - your story IS horseshit. You now have 2 people who sat next to him 8+ hours a week on the record. Will you retract or correct your story?



Will Cain ✓ @willcain · Dec 3

Replying to @willcain

Your story is horseshit @NBCNews. Put my name on it. On the record. It'll be your only on the record source.

Signed,

The guy who sat next to him for 8 hours every week for five years starting at ...

[Show more](#)

10:51 PM · Dec 3, 2024 · 1.4M Views



Evita Duffy-Alfonso ✓
@evitaduffy_1

I stand with Pete and his beautiful family in the face of these smears. [@NBCNews](#) did not contact my mom [@RCamposDuffy](#) or [@willcain](#) for their latest anonymously sourced hit piece because it is total bs. The state and their mouthpieces in the propaganda press hate Pete because they FEAR Pete—and that's exactly what America needs.



Last edited 9:30 PM · 12/3/24 · 12K Views



Rob Smith 
@robsmithonline

Subscribe

Generally when Pete Hegseth was helping book me on Fox segments, counseling me on career moves, or making crucial introductions for me in the political and media world, I didn't smell alcohol on him.

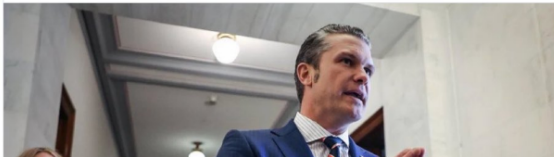
You truly do not hate the media enough.



Yashar Ali 
@yashar · 4h
NEW

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Two of those people said that on more than a dozen occasions during Hegseth's time as a co-host of "Fox & Friends Weekend," which Show



Charlie Kirk 
@charliekirk11

Pete has always been an absolute pro, totally respectful, humble, and kind. Every single time he's interviewed me, even at 6am ET on a Saturday or Sunday morning, he's been sharp and totally prepared. This includes 5-6 years of being on F+F with Pete. This story is garbage.

10:54 PM · 12/3/24 · **1.3K** Views



Monica Crowley 
@MonicaCrowley

. [@PeteHegseth](#) is a soldier's soldier, not a servant of the military-industrial complex. This is why he's taking so much incoming.

We need him as SecDef. Tell your Senators politely but firmly to confirm him.

I stand with my friend Pete 

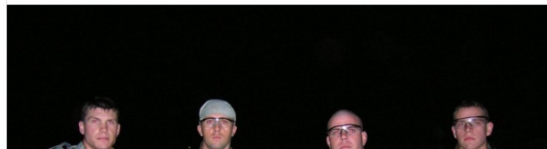


Pete Hegseth 
@PeteHegseth · 2h

I'm doing this for the warfighters, not the warmongers.

The Left is afraid of disrupters and change agents. They are afraid of [@realDonaldTrump](#)—and me. So they smear w/ fake, anonymous sources & BS stories. They don't want truth.

Our warriors never back down, & neither will I.



LeoTerrell 
@TheLeoTerrell

Follow

There are haters in the world! I love [@PeteHegseth](#)



Dan Bongino 
@dbongino · 6h

Worked with Pete for years. This is absolute BULLSHIT. [x.com/yashar/status/...](#)

5:56 PM · 12/3/24 · **25K** Views



Piers Morgan
@piersmorgan

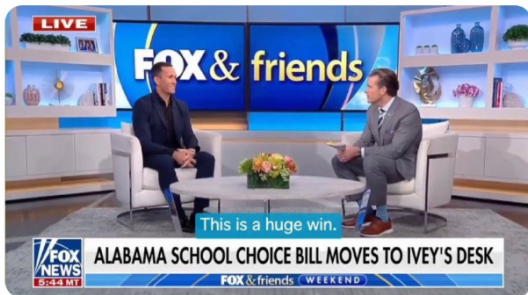
This relentless onslaught against [@PeteHegseth](#) is getting pathetic. Done [@foxandfriends](#) many times with him and never known Pete be anything but utterly professional on camera and a nice, respectful guy off it.



Corey A. DeAngelis, sch...
@DeAngelisCorey

Follow back

I've been interviewed by [@PeteHegseth](#) and have chatted with him before/after segments. He never smelled or acted like he was under the influence.



Tomi Lahren
@TomiLahren

Subscribe

Add me also. Pete has always been the epitome of a class act and a great guy. These attacks are shameful BS.

9:39 PM · 12/3/24 · **8.9K** Views



Yashar Ali @yashar · 4h

NEW

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Guy Benson
@guypbenson

I've co-hosted with Pete and have never experienced anything like what was claimed in this anonymously-sourced report.

9:30 PM · 12/3/24 · **983** Views



Breanna Morello ✓
@BreannaMorello

Follow

As a former Fox producer, I've never heard this in my life.

Everyone spoke highly of him and still does til this day.

I noticed the employees are anonymous.



Mollie ✓
@MZHemingway

Subscribe

I can't stand the propaganda practice of using anonymous sources to smear political opponents, as NBC does here. FWIW, I have nothing but good things to say about Pete and the anonymously sourced stories don't match my personal experience in any way. Quite the contrary, in fact.



Will Cain ✓ @willcain · 5h

Your story is horseshit @NBCNews. Put my name on it. On the record. It'll be your only on the record source.
Signed,
The guy who sat next to him for 8 hours every wee...

10:30 PM · 12/3/24 · 1.8K Views



Yashar Ali 🐘 @yashar · 3h

NEW

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Two of those people said that on more than a dozen occasions during Hegseth's time as a co-host of "Fox & Friends Weekend," which Show more



Lara Logan ✓
@laralogan

Subscribe

I'm with Sara Carter - in the time I worked with Pete he was never anything but professional towards me. This hit piece is just that - a hit piece.



Carol Roth ✓
@caroljsroth

Follow

Back when I used to come to NY for the Blaze Roundtable show (which you and Pete were on), Pete was absolutely professional. I was also interviewed by him on F&F Weekends and again, very professional. I've been in media around 15 years and never heard anything but nice things about him.

8:12 PM · 12/3/24 · 28K Views



Will Cain ✓ @willcain · 9m

Known him for over a decade: @SaraCarterDC
Reported on all media gossip: @NewsPolitics

@PeteHegseth was as drunk on set, etc., as people are saying, it would've been gossip everywhere. I was Managing Editor at @Mediaite when the Roger Ailes stuff went down. That place (Fox) talks/leaks a LOT. Until tonight. Not a word or post on the current media gossip sites about the smell of booze, nothing. The media business is brutal. Getting rid of him if he was drinking opens up another prime spot for the next star in line to take a seat on the couch. It's just that simple. Someone would've leaked it far sooner. This is a hit piece and garbage, nothing more.



at The Blaze way back when and as a contributor for Fox since 2017, I have never once seen this type of reported lies or behavior. He's always been a gentleman and great guy!

Yashar Ali 🐘 @yashar · 5h

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10:15 PM · 12/3/24 · 938 Views



Lisa Boothe 
@LisaMarieBoothe

I've guest co-hosted with him numerous times before. Not once did this happen. Not once have I heard this from others. This is such a disgusting and false smear. It is wrong and malicious.



Yashar Ali  @yashar · 5h

NEW

Ten current and former Fox employees say that Pete Hegseth, Trump's pick for defense secretary, drank in ways that concerned his co-workers.

Two of those people said that on more than a dozen occasions during Hegseth's time as a co-host of "Fox & Friends Weekend," which Show more



 Alec Lace reposted



Alec Lace 
@AlecLace

I've been interviewed several times by Pete Hegseth and even swam across the Hudson River with him.
As a recovering alcoholic myself (6 years clean) it is very easy to pick up on the signs when someone is drinking. With Pete, there were never any signs. Totally hit job.



11:22 PM · 12/3/24 · 4.8K Views



Will Cain 
@willcain

Bullshit. 100 percent bullshit. Actually... horseshit.



Yashar Ali  @yashar · 31m

NEW

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Two of those people said that on more than a dozen occasions during Hegseth's time as a co-host of "Fox & Friends Weekend," which Show more



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Jillian Anderson 
@Jillie_Alexis

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I used to book Pete on Fox while he was still in the Army.. always pleasant and professional and preferred no makeup 😊

7:48 AM · 12/4/24 · 478 Views



Liked by makeupvincenza and others

gavilife_work_travel After a 4 hour TV show! This is how we came together behind the camera ..

For over a decade. I have worked with [@petehegseth](#) from the beginning of his career in TV , and I never saw, or witnessed any inappropriate behavior. Always kind, professional and hard working.

A good Military man who loves God, his family, friend and his country.

The glory belongs to God.

God blesses you all 🇺🇸



Janice Dean [@JaniceDean](#)

I've worked with [@PeteHegseth](#) since the beginning. Never witnessed any of this behavior from him. Always kind, professional and hard working. A good man that loves his family and his country.

6:52 AM · 12/4/24 · 65K Views



Brian Brenberg [@BrianBrenberg](#)

Follow

I've been on air with Pete as early and late as you can be, and all hours in between. More times than I can count. Never have I observed what's being peddled in the media right now.



Will Cain [@willcain](#) · 16h

10 "anonymous sources" for [@NBCNews](#).

Here's your on the record statements from people who worked with [@PeteHegseth](#). I know there's MANY more of you. Drop it here. 📌
[@dbongino](#) [@NBSaphierMD](#) [@Johnny_Joey](#) [@kylanabecker](#)

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Yashar Ali [@yashar](#) · 3h

NEW
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9:18 AM · 12/4/24 · 82K Views

Hegseth Has Been Open About Previously Resorting To Alcohol After Returning From War

NOTE: Hegseth Has Been Open About Resorting To Alcohol During A Period In His Life When He Had Returned To The U.S. From Active Military Duty And Felt Lost. "Hegseth has been open about resorting to alcohol during a period in his life when he had returned to the U.S. from active military duty and felt lost. In a 2022 interview with the Reserve & National Guard Magazine, he said that, after coming home, he felt isolated and unmoored." (Jane Mayer, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)

COMMENTS ON KEY ISSUES

WOMEN IN COMBAT

Hegseth Previously Said He Does Not Believe Women Should Serve In Combat Roles, But Has Softened His Stance As Of December 2024 After Meeting With Senate Republicans Ahead Of His Confirmation Hearing

Hegseth Has Publicly Expressed Opposition To Women Serving In Combat Roles, Arguing That It Complicates Military Operations And Does Not Enhance Effectiveness

VIDEO: In November 2024, Hegseth Said He Does Not Support Women In Combat, Saying "I Love Women Service Members Who Contribute Amazingly," But That "Everything About Men And Women Serving Together Makes The Situation More Complicated And Complication In Combat Means Casualties Are Worse." HEGSETH: "Well you'd have to change the academies too, right. So that's where you have to change both sides of that squeeze, you have to. I mean admission standards, overall standards. I think a huge one is women in combat and quotes. I think the way they pushed that had had nothing, zero to do with efficacy. Zero to do with lethality and capability."

HOST: "You don't like women in combat? Why not?" HEGSETH: "No. Um, I love women service members who contribute amazingly. Because everything about men and women serving together makes the situation more complicated and complication in combat means casualties are worse." (Pete Hegseth - Secretary of Defense Nominee | SRS #143, [Shawn Ryan Show Podcast](#), 11/7/24) MINUTE: 53:14-55:13

VIDEO: Hegseth Criticized Washington And The Obama Administration For Lowering Standards To Allow Women In Combat Roles And Hit Diversity Quotes. HEGSETH: "Well you'd have to change the academies too, right. So that's where you have to change both sides of that squeeze, you have to. I mean admission standards, overall standards. I think a huge one is women in combat and quotes. I think the way they pushed that had had nothing, zero to do with efficacy. Zero to do with lethality and capability." HOST: "You don't like women in combat? Why not?" HEGSETH: "No. Um, I love women service members who contribute amazingly. Because everything about men and women serving together makes the situation more complicated and complication in combat means casualties are worse. And when you actually go under the hood again and you know I I've got 99% positive response to this, a few, a little bit of push back. But when you actually break down what they did and the studies to open the door for women in combat, I mean they just ignored them. So the Marine Corps was the only service that actually tried to fight back and say. Now, obviously I'm exempting special operations, which thus far has held the line fairly well because if they were lowering the standard to become a Navy SEAL just to let women inside the Navy Seals, that's going to change the capabilities and ethos of the Navy Seals except for a very small example of some you know female super soldier who's capable of doing it. But because of how Washington works, they're going to change the standards, they're going to push for quotas. We have numerous quotes in the book of 'no, no the standards aren't changing they're just evolving to meet the needs of today. They're not getting tougher, no. So they're getting lower for every. Take someone like Millie, I mean he was calling down to individual units to make sure they had female company commanders after

they graduated from Rangers School. Like what's the chairman of the Joint Chiefs doing pushing company command slots. It's all an agenda it's all to 'oh we have this first or we have this that.' So that's proliferated everywhere." (Pete Hegseth - Secretary of Defense Nominee | SRS #143, [Shawn Ryan Show Podcast](#), 11/7/24) MINUTE: 53:14-55:13

- **VIDEO: Hegseth Called It "All An Agenda."** HEGSETH: "Like what's the chairman of the Joint Chiefs doing pushing company command slots. It's all an agenda it's all to 'oh we have this first or we have this that.' So that's proliferated everywhere." (Pete Hegseth - Secretary of Defense Nominee | SRS #143, [Shawn Ryan Show Podcast](#), 11/7/24) MINUTE: 53:14-55:13

VIDEO: In November 2014, Hegseth Said He Was Surprised He Hadn't Received More Blowback Because He Was "Straight Up Just Saying We Should Not Have Women In Combat Roles," Adding, "It Hasn't Made Us More Effective, It Hasn't Made Us More Lethal, It Has Made Fighting More Complicated." "I'm surprised there hasn't been any more blowback on that already in the book. Because I'm straight up just saying we should not have women in combat roles. It hasn't made us more effective, it hasn't made us more lethal, it has made fighting more complicated. Most of them, actually are a lot of them are pushed I shouldn't say most but many are pushed into a combat track because they're so highly capable, but if they had their first choice it probably wouldn't be that." (Pete Hegseth - Secretary of Defense Nominee | SRS #143, [Shawn Ryan Show Podcast](#), 11/7/24) MINUTE 56:48-57:18

- **Hegseth Has Said He Was Not Suggesting Women Should Not Be Combat Pilots, But That They Should Not Be In Jobs Such As Seals, Army Rangers, Infantry, Armor And Artillery Where "Strength Is A Differentiator."** "Hegseth has said he is not suggesting women should not be combat pilots, but that they should not be in jobs such as SEALs, Army Rangers, infantry, armor and artillery where 'strength is a differentiator.' He insists the military lowered standards to get more women into combat roles. The services have said they did not decrease the standards for any of the combat jobs." (Lolita C. Baldor, "Should Women Be Allowed To Fight On The Front Lines? Trump's Defense Pick Reignites The Debate," [The Associated Press](#), 11/18/24)

Hegseth Has Claimed The Military Lowered Standards To Get More Women Into Combat Roles; However, The Services Have Said They Did Not Decrease The Standards For Any Of The Combat Jobs. "Hegseth has said he is not suggesting women should not be combat pilots, but that they should not be in jobs such as SEALs, Army Rangers, infantry, armor and artillery where 'strength is a differentiator.' He insists the military lowered standards to get more women into combat roles. The services have said they did not decrease the standards for any of the combat jobs." (Lolita C. Baldor, "Should Women Be Allowed To Fight On The Front Lines? Trump's Defense Pick Reignites The Debate," [The Associated Press](#), 11/18/24)

Hegseth Has Written About Opposing Women In Combat Roles In His Books

In A Passage Of His Book, Hegseth Decried What He Said Is Liberals' Rejection Of "Simple Realities" Affecting The Military, Including Greater Male Strength And Aggressiveness. "In another passage, Hegseth decries what he says is liberals' rejection of "simple realities" affecting the military, including what he identifies as greater male strength and aggressiveness. While he praises women's historical service in noncombat roles, he pans the Pentagon's 2015 decision, under then-President Barack Obama, to allow women to serve in all combat roles." (Missy Ryan And Evan Hill, "Trump Pentagon Pick Dismissed Military Diversity Drive, Demonized Islam," [The Washington Post](#), 11/14/24)

- **Hegseth Praised Women's Historical Service In Noncombat Roles, But Criticized The Pentagon's 2015 Decision, Under Then-President Barack Obama, To Allow Women To Serve In All Combat Roles.** "In another passage, Hegseth decries what he says is liberals' rejection of "simple realities" affecting the military, including what he identifies as greater male strength and aggressiveness. While he praises women's historical service in noncombat roles, he pans the Pentagon's 2015 decision, under then-President Barack Obama, to allow women to serve in all combat roles." (Missy Ryan And Evan Hill, "Trump Pentagon Pick Dismissed Military Diversity Drive, Demonized Islam," [The Washington Post](#), 11/14/24)

In His Book, Hegseth Cited Biological Differences Between Men And Women, Including Greater Muscle Mass Among Men, Which He Said Made Women Less Apt For The Demands Of Combat. "In his book, Hegseth cites biological differences between men and women, including greater muscle mass among men, which he said made women less apt for the demands of combat. 'Men are, gasp, biologically stronger, faster and bigger. Dare I say, physically superior,' he wrote." (Missy Ryan And Evan Hill, "Trump Pentagon Pick Dismissed Military Diversity Drive, Demonized Islam," [The Washington Post](#), 11/14/24)

- **HEGSETH: "Men Are, Gasp, Biologically Stronger, Faster And Bigger. Dare I Say, Physically Superior."** "In his book, Hegseth cites biological differences between men and women, including greater muscle mass among men, which he said made women less apt for the demands of combat. 'Men are, gasp, biologically stronger, faster and bigger. Dare I say, physically superior,' he wrote." (Missy Ryan And Evan Hill, "Trump Pentagon Pick Dismissed Military Diversity Drive, Demonized Islam," [The Washington Post](#), 11/14/24)

Hegseth Also Rejected Arguments Put Forward By Pentagon Leaders When They Announced The Combat Integration Decision That Women Deserved The Opportunity To Serve In Any Unit If They Could Meet Its Standards. "He also rejected arguments put forward by Pentagon leaders when they announced the combat integration decision, which was controversial within the military and opposed by some uniformed leaders: that women deserved the opportunity to serve in any unit if they could meet its standards. Rather, Hegseth said, the move would result in high casualties should those units see combat. 'Dads push us to take risks. Moms put the training wheels on our bikes,' he wrote. 'We need moms. But not in the military, and especially not in combat units.'" (Missy Ryan And Evan Hill, "Trump Pentagon Pick Dismissed Military Diversity Drive, Demonized Islam," [The Washington Post](#), 11/14/24)

- **Hegseth Said The Move Would Result In High Casualties Should Those Units See Combat, Saying, "Dads Push Us To Take Risks. Moms Put The Training Wheels On Our Bikes. We Need Moms. But Not In The Military, And Especially Not In Combat Units."** "He also rejected arguments put forward by Pentagon leaders when they announced the combat integration decision, which was controversial within the military and opposed by some uniformed leaders: that women deserved the opportunity to serve in any unit if they could meet its standards. Rather, Hegseth said, the move would result in high casualties should those units see combat. 'Dads push us to take risks. Moms put the training wheels on our bikes,' he wrote. 'We need moms. But not in the military, and especially not in combat units.'" (Missy Ryan And Evan Hill, "Trump Pentagon Pick Dismissed Military Diversity Drive, Demonized Islam," [The Washington Post](#), 11/14/24)
- **Hegseth Also Criticized Admiral Lisa Franchetti, Whom Biden Selected In 2023 To Become The Navy's First Female Chief Of Staff, Overruling A Recommendation From His Pentagon Chief Who Favored A Male Officer.** "In another suggestion that President Joe Biden's focus on

diversifying the military's senior leadership would erode the armed forces' overall effectiveness, Hegseth singles out Adm. Lisa Franchetti, whom Biden selected in 2023 to become the Navy's first female chief of staff, overruling a recommendation from his Pentagon chief who favored a male officer. 'If naval operations suffer, at least we can hold our heads high,' Hegseth writes."

(Missy Ryan And Evan Hill, "Trump Pentagon Pick Dismissed Military Diversity Drive, Demonized Islam," [The Washington Post](#), 11/14/24)

Some Senators Have Brought Up Hegseth's Position On Women In Combat In His Confirmation Meetings

North Dakota Senator Kevin Cramer Said He Confronted Hegseth About His Stance On Women In Combat, Saying He Told Him, "Just So You Know, Joni Ernst And Tammy Duckworth Deserve A Great Deal Of Respect." "North Dakota Sen. Kevin Cramer said Wednesday that he confronted Hegseth about the issue when they spoke one-on-one. 'I said to him, just so you know, Joni Ernst and Tammy Duckworth deserve a great deal of respect,' Cramer said, referring to two female senators who sit on the Senate Armed Services Committee. Both Ernst, R-Iowa, and Duckworth, D-Ill., are combat veterans who served in the Iraq war, and Duckworth lost both legs when a Blackhawk helicopter she was piloting was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade." (Mary Clare Jalonick, Lisa Mascaro And Lolita C. Baldor, "Hegseth Faces Senators' Concerns Not Only About His Behavior But Also His Views On Women In Combat," [The Associated Press](#), 12/5/24)

- **Both Female Senators Sit On The Senate Armed Services Committee And Are Combat Veterans Who Served In The Iraq War; Duckworth Lost Both Legs When A Blackhawk Helicopter She Was Piloting Was Hit By A Rocket-Propelled Grenade.** "North Dakota Sen. Kevin Cramer said Wednesday that he confronted Hegseth about the issue when they spoke one-on-one. 'I said to him, just so you know, Joni Ernst and Tammy Duckworth deserve a great deal of respect,' Cramer said, referring to two female senators who sit on the Senate Armed Services Committee. Both Ernst, R-Iowa, and Duckworth, D-Ill., are combat veterans who served in the Iraq war, and Duckworth lost both legs when a Blackhawk helicopter she was piloting was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade." (Mary Clare Jalonick, Lisa Mascaro And Lolita C. Baldor, "Hegseth Faces Senators' Concerns Not Only About His Behavior But Also His Views On Women In Combat," [The Associated Press](#), 12/5/24)
- **In Response To His Position, Sen. Duckworth Said, "Where Do You Think I Lost My Legs, In A Bar Fight? I'm Pretty Sure I Was In Combat When That Happened," Adding That Hegseth's Position "Just Shows How Out Of Touch He Is With The Nature Of Modern Warfare If He Thinks That We Can Keep Women Behind That Sort Of Imaginary Line."** "Lawmakers are divided on Hegseth's views. 'Where do you think I lost my legs, in a bar fight? I'm pretty sure I was in combat when that happened,' snapped Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., in a CNN interview last Wednesday after Trump's selection was announced. Duckworth, who flew combat missions in Iraq and lost both legs when her helicopter was hit, added, 'It just shows how out of touch he is with the nature of modern warfare if he thinks that we can keep women behind that sort of imaginary line.'" (Lolita C. Baldor, "Should Women Be Allowed To Fight On The Front Lines? Trump's Defense Pick Reignites The Debate," [The Associated Press](#), 11/18/24)

Sen. Lindsay Graham, R-SC, Praised Hegseth And Said The Reality Is That Certain Military Jobs "Just Need Brute Strength." "Sen. Lindsay Graham, R-S.C., praised Hegseth and said the reality is that certain military jobs 'just need brute strength.' But he added, 'women have served incredibly well, honorably in combat roles, and I don't think that policy is going to change, but we'll leave it up

to him.'" (Lolita C. Baldor, "Should Women Be Allowed To Fight On The Front Lines? Trump's Defense Pick Reignites The Debate," [The Associated Press](#), 11/18/24)

Since Meeting With Senators Ahead Of His Confirmation Hearing, Hegseth Has Reiterated His Support For Women In The Military

VIDEO: During A December 2024 Fox News Interview, Hegseth Called Women "Some Of Our Greatest Warriors" And Said, "Our Best Warriors Out There Are Women." "Pete Hegseth, President-elect Trump's nominee to lead the Pentagon, praised women in the military as some of the 'greatest warriors' after critics took issue with comments he made about women not being fit to serve in combat roles. 'I also want an opportunity here to clarify comments that have been misconstrued, that I somehow don't support women in the military, some of our greatest warriors, our best warriors out there are women,' he told Fox News' Sean Hannity on Monday. Female service members 'love our nation, want to defend that flag, and they do it every single day around the globe. I'm not presuming anything,' he added." (Morgan Phillips, "'Greatest Warriors': Hegseth Rails Against 'Misconstrued' Narrative That He's Against Women In Military," [Fox News](#), 12/9/24)

Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO) Said During Their December 10, 2024, Meeting, Hegseth Said He Was Supportive Of Women Serving In Combat. "Sen. Josh Hawley (R-Mo.), who is opposed to a compulsory military draft for women, said he checked in with Hegseth on the issue during their Wednesday meeting and Hegseth agreed with him. But Hegseth also volunteered that he was for women serving in combat, Hawley said. 'He was asked in our post-meeting gaggle [with reporters] whether he was supportive of women in combat and his answer was he was supportive of that,' Hawley said." (Joe Gould And Connor O'Brien, "Hegseth Does A 180 On Women And Gays In Combat," [Politico](#), 12/13/24)

WOKENESS IN THE MILITARY

Hegseth Strongly Opposes Wokeness & DEI Initiatives In The Military

In November 2024, Hegseth Said He Believed Wokeness Internally Was The Biggest Threat To The Military

VIDEO: While Hegseth Has Described Countries Like Russia And China As Threats, He Has Framed The Military's Biggest Threat As An Internal One, Arguing That "Wokeness" Divided The Military Internally And Created An Issue That Adversaries Can Exploit, Remarking, "I Think Our Biggest Threat Is Internal." "While Hegseth has described countries like Russia and China as threats, he has framed the military's biggest threat as an internal one, arguing that 'wokeness' divided the military internally and created an issue that adversaries can exploit. 'I think our biggest threat is internal. I think we're committing cultural suicide, and we've lost complete focus on the basics and building blocks of what made Western civilization in America exceptional, fruitful, prosperous, strong, free,' Hegseth said on the podcast." (Peter Charalambous, "Pete Hegseth's Plan To Overhaul America's Military: 'You Need To Fire A Ton Of Generals'," [ABC News](#), 11/14/24; [Shawn Ryan Show Podcast](#), 11/7/24, MINUTE 1:31:37)

VIDEO: In November 2024, Hegseth Questioned How The Military Allowed Itself To Go Woke, And Said, "The Dumbest Phrase On Planet Earth In The Military Is 'Our Diversity Is Our Strength.'" HEGSETH: "The deeper question is, how did the military allow itself to go woke? How did our general class how did our military academies, how did military leaders who are suspected to

live by an ethos and a code who, they're in the job of meritocracy and lethality, of excellence, of no excuses. Of equality and unity, not equity and diversity. The dumbest phrase on planet earth in the military is our diversity is our strength. It's, our unity is what unites us. Our unity of effort, our ability to say yes, we're different but we come together as a team to accomplish a mission." (Pete Hegseth - Secretary of Defense Nominee | SRS #143, [Shawn Ryan Show Podcast](#), 11/7/24) MINUTE 22:48-23:39

Hegseth Has Criticized Lowering Readiness Standards To Increase Diversity Among Candidates And Urged Trump To Fire Generals Involved In Diversity Initiatives

In November 2024, Hegseth, Said The New Trump Administration Has To Fire The Chairman Of Joint Chiefs And That Anyone Who Was "Involved In Any Of The DEI Woke Shit Has Got To Go."

HEGSETH: "So there's a chance to course correct it would take the new a new Trump Administration going after it really hard." SHAWN RYAN: "How would they correct it? HEGSETH: "Well first all you got to fire you know you got to fire the Chairman of Joint Chiefs and you've got to fire this I mean obviously you're going to bring in a new Secretary of Defense. But any General that was involved General. Admiral, whatever that was involved in any of the DEI woke shit has got to go. Like either you're in for war fighting that and that's it and that's the only litmus test we care about." (Pete Hegseth - Secretary of Defense Nominee | SRS #143, [Shawn Ryan Show Podcast](#), 11/7/24) MINUTE: 28:45-31:39

VIDEO: In November 2024, Hegseth Said , "You've Got To Get DEI And CRT Out Of Military Academy So You're Not Training Young Officers To Be Baptized In This Type Of Thinking."

HEGSETH: "You've got to get DEI and CRT out of Military Academy so you're not training young officers to be baptized in this type of thinking. And then you know whatever the standards whatever the combat standards were say and I don't know 1995 let's just make those the standards and as far as recruiting to hire the guy that you know did Top Gun Maverick and create some real ads that motivate people to want to serve." (Pete Hegseth - Secretary of Defense Nominee | SRS #143, [Shawn Ryan Show Podcast](#), 11/7/24) MINUTE: 28:45-31:39

In His 2024 Book, Hegseth Called Out Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr., The Chairman Of The Joint Chiefs Of Staff, Whom He Accused Of Supporting Lowered Readiness Standards As Air Force Chief Of Staff By Seeking To Increase Diversity Among Officer Candidates, Which Hegseth Said Was "Racist" And "Illegal." "In his 2024 book, Hegseth also calls out Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr., the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, whom he accuses of supporting lowered readiness standards as Air Force chief of staff. He cites a memo that Brown, who is African American, signed in that role seeking to increase diversity among officer candidates, which Hegseth said was 'racist' and 'illegal.' In a podcast last week, Hegseth urged Trump to fire Brown and other officers involved in diversity initiatives." (Missy Ryan And Evan Hill, "Trump Pentagon Pick Dismissed Military Diversity Drive, Demonized Islam," [The Washington Post](#), 11/14/24)

- **Hegseth Urged Trump To Fire Gen. Charles Q. Brown And Other Officers Involved In Diversity Initiatives.** "In his 2024 book, Hegseth also calls out Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr., the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, whom he accuses of supporting lowered readiness standards as Air Force chief of staff. He cites a memo that Brown, who is African American, signed in that role seeking to increase diversity among officer candidates, which Hegseth said was 'racist' and 'illegal.' In a podcast last week, Hegseth urged Trump to fire Brown and other officers involved in diversity initiatives." (Missy Ryan And Evan Hill, "Trump Pentagon Pick Dismissed Military Diversity Drive, Demonized Islam," [The Washington Post](#), 11/14/24)

LGBTQ Troops

Hegseth Has Said He Supports Gays Serving In The Military

"While Meeting With Sen. Rand Paul, Hegseth Said "Yes" When Asked If He Thought Gays Should Serve In The Military. "Pete Hegseth softened his stance against women in combat and gays in the military after he previously suggested they shouldn't fill those roles. His evolving rhetoric — which came after meetings with more moderate senators — signals an effort to soothe lingering concerns his leadership might cause upheaval to a diverse, modern military. It could also serve as a guide for Trump's other would-be nominees who face headwinds in their confirmations. Hegseth has called policies allowing gays and transgender troops to serve in the military part of a 'Marxist agenda.' But on Thursday, when he met with Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), reporters asked him whether he thought gays should serve in the military, and he replied, 'Yes.'" (Joe Gould And Connor O'Brien, "Hegseth Does A 180 On Women And Gays In Combat," [Politico](#), 12/13/14)

Hegseth Opposes Transgender Service Members

VIDEO: Hegseth Opposes Transgender Service Members And Said That Transgender Soldiers Are "Not Deployable" Because They Are "Reliant On Chemicals," Noting That Soldiers Weren't Even Allowed To Use An Inhaler With Doing Exercised Because You Couldn't Count On Having It In A Combat Situation. HEGSETH: "And then transgenders I mean the idea that do you remember if you go through uh your mob station to deploy um if you had a cat 4 dental they pulled your tooth mhm because you can't be out in the field with a major you know dental emergency where there's no dentist and so I deployed with a lot of guys who were like because they just had a tooth pull and they had to yet we're now allowing people who used to be men or women join uh and then after that we pay for medical or physical transitions to another gender which by definition makes them non-deployable and non-trainable for your because they're and the same thing with um asthma medication or inhalers like when you're in basic training you can't have an inhaler when you're doing your exercises because you can't count on having an inhaler in a combat situation well if you're medically dependent on drugs um to maintain your gender or a particular balance of chemicals inside your body you're by definition not non-deployable and so you'd have they'd have soldiers who can't train can't deploy have been on the books and yet everyone has to be careful about what pronoun you use with them yeah that has nothing to do with how effective a unit's going to be and yet we. So something like that should be banned on day one in a Trump Administration we're not doing the and he did that got immediately reversed under Biden things like that because it's a top down I'm not saying top down is the only way that works. (Pete Hegseth - Secretary of Defense Nominee | SRS #143, [Shawn Ryan Show Podcast](#), 11/7/24) MINUTE: 1:06:22-1:08:01

- **VIDEO: Hegseth Argued That By That Standard, Being Transgender Makes You "Non-Deployable."** HEGSETH: "And then transgenders I mean the idea that do you remember if you go through uh your mob station to deploy um if you had a cat 4 dental they pulled your tooth mhm because you can't be out in the field with a major you know dental emergency where there's no dentist and so I deployed with a lot of guys who were like because they just had a tooth pull and they had to yet we're now allowing people who used to be men or women join uh and then after that we pay for medical or physical transitions to another gender which by definition makes them non-deployable and non-trainable for your because they're and the same

thing with um asthma medication or inhalers like when you're in basic training you can't have an inhaler when you're doing your exercises because you can't count on having an inhaler in a combat situation well if you're medically dependent on drugs um to maintain your gender or a particular balance of chemicals inside your body you're by definition not non-deployable and so you'd have they'd have soldiers who can't train can't deploy have been on the books and yet everyone has to be careful about what pronoun you use with them yeah that has nothing to do with how effective a unit's going to be and yet we. So something like that should be banned on day one in a Trump Administration we're not doing the and he did that got immediately reversed under Biden things like that because it's a top down I'm not saying top down is the only way that works. (Pete Hegseth - Secretary of Defense Nominee | SRS #143, [Shawn Ryan Show Podcast](#), 11/7/24) MINUTE: 1:06:22-1:08:01

Labeled An Extremist Over A Tattoo

Hegseth Was Flagged As Potential Military "Insider Threat" Due To Some Of His Tattoos

In 2021, Hegseth Was Barred From Participating In President Biden's Inauguration Because A Military Officer Was Alarmed That Hegseth Had Tattoos Of A Crusader's Cross And The Motto "Deus Vult", Insignias Popular With Far-Right Militants, And Had Alerted Superiors That Hegseth Might Constitute An "Insider Threat." "In 2021, he was barred from participating in President Biden's Inauguration because a military officer was alarmed that Hegseth had tattoos of a Crusader's cross and the motto 'Deus Vult'—insignias popular with far-right militants—and had alerted superiors that Hegseth might constitute an 'insider threat.'" (Jane Mayer, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)

- **VIDEO: When Speaking About The Issue, Hegseth Noted That On The Back Of His New Book He Wrote, "I Joined The Army To Fight Extremist In 2001. 20 Years Later That Same Army Labeled Me One."** HEGSETH: "I mean if you if you look at the back cover of the book it says 'I joined the army to fight extremist in 2001. 20 years later that same Army labeled me one.' Yeah so I got out because, and I could tell the story or not, but I was deemed an extremist because of a tattoo by my National Guard unit in Washington DC and my orders were revoked to guard the Biden inauguration." (Pete Hegseth - Secretary of Defense Nominee | SRS #143, [Shawn Ryan Show Podcast](#), 11/7/24) MINUTE: 28:45-31:39

VIDEO: In November 2024, Hegseth Said It Was His Jerusalem Cross Tattoo That Got Him Disinvited From Being At Biden's Inauguration, Claiming That The Department Of Defense Went All In On DEI, CRT, And A Transformation Focused On Patriot Extremism. HEGSETH: "I mean if you if you look at the back cover of the book it says 'I joined the army to fight extremist in 2001. 20 years later that same Army labeled me one.' Yeah so I got out because, and I could tell the story or not, but I was deemed an extremist because of a tattoo by my National Guard unit in Washington DC and my orders were revoked to guard the Biden inauguration. But all of this, so you have what happened with George Floyd. ... But you had the George Floyd riots, and then I was also in the DC guard during the what happened in front of the White House. You remember the insurrection that no one calls an insurrection outside the White House when they you know burned the church down and and got to the gates of the White House. I was there the second night through the fifth night of all of that. I was a 04 major holding a riot shield because they didn't have enough guys. So we were just out there doing our thing. And let me explain a little bit about that. That happens then January 6th happens, and then both of those moments become pretenses for the DoD with political

appointees who've long since been burrowed in and Generals who are all in for the politically correct agenda. They maybe kept their head down during Trump because he didn't want to hear about it. Guys like Millie, guys like Austin, they were right there waiting in the wings ready to go and once the combination of Floyd and January 6th happened, they went all in on DEI and CRT and transformation focusing on patriot extremism. That's we talk all about that in the book, you know Gadsden flags are signs of radicalism get the bumper sticker off your car. You know a Jerusalem cross tattoo, which is just a Christian symbol, yep this one right here this what got me disinvented."

(Pete Hegseth - Secretary of Defense Nominee | SRS #143, [Shawn Ryan Show Podcast](#), 11/7/24) MINUTE: 28:45-31:39

- **Hegseth Identified His Cross Tattoo As The Subject Of The Controversy; However, It Was Actually A Different Tattoo, The Latin Phrase "Deus Vult" That Prompted The Complaint.**

"According to Hegseth's account, the tattoo in question was identified by his superiors as 'white nationalist.' The symbol that Hegseth identified as the subject of the controversy is known as the Jerusalem Cross, and looks like a large cross with four smaller ones in the corners. Hegseth has said that the tattoo, emblazoned on his chest, is simply a symbol of Christianity. However, it was a different tattoo that prompted the complaint. Six days before the inauguration, a former member of the DC Guard's Antiterrorism and Force Protection (ATFP) flagged in an email to a senior officer that Hegseth had, imprinted on his bicep, the Latin phrase 'Deus Vult.' NPR has reviewed the email." (Shannon Bond, Tom Bowman, Odette Yousef, And Quil Lawrence, "What's Behind Defense Secretary Pick Hegseth's War On 'Woke,'" [NPR](#), 11/15/24)

Hegseth Noted That He Had Never Had Orders Revoked Before, And Said Someone Inside The D.C. National Guard Trolled His Social Media, Found His Tattoo, And Used It As An Excuse To Call Him A White Nationalist And Extremist, Deeming Him A Potential Threat At The Inauguration. HEGSETH: "I'd never had orders revoked before I mean listen it's a standard deal.

You remember after January 6th everyone was in Washington DC, like Nancy Pelosi had the parking garage is full of national Guardsmen, the fence was up, I was going and my commander called me a day before tepidly and was like 'uh major you can just stand down we don't need it we're good.' I'm like what do you mean everybody's there he's like no no no we're he couldn't tell me uh and then of course when I was writing the book I reached out to somebody in the unit who could confirm with 99.9% certainty because he was on in the meetings and on the emails. Nope, someone inside the DC guard trolled your social media, found a tattoo, used it as an excuse to call you a white nationalist, an extremist and you were specifically by name orders revoked to guard the inauguration because you were considered a potential threat." (Pete Hegseth - Secretary of Defense Nominee | SRS #143, [Shawn Ryan](#)

[Show Podcast](#), 11/7/24) MINUTE: 28:45-31:39

Hegseth Pushed Back On That Idea, Saying "I Volunteered To Go To Afghanistan Under Barack Obama. I'm No Democrat But I Believed, I Was Hopeful The Surge In Afghanistan Might Work And I Volunteered To Go In 2011, 2012." HEGSETH: "It's a Christian symbol, that's all it is, there's a lot of guys but I got a Christian symbol here I got you know no it because it wasn't about that. It was about I don't know, was it I'm too conservative, is it because I'm a Trump supporter, is it because I was a reporter on January 6th, maybe I worked at Fox, maybe that was it. They just, they had decided Pete Hegseth is not qualified to guard the inauguration of a Democrat president. Which is ridiculous because I volunteered to go to Afghanistan under Barack Obama. I'm no Democrat but I believed, I was hopeful the surge in Afghanistan might work and I volunteered to go

in 2011, 2012. So it's never been about for guys like you and me it's never been about Republicans and Democrats it's been about the Republic and that's all been put into question in everyone's mind." (Pete Hegseth - Secretary of Defense Nominee | SRS #143, [Shawn Ryan Show Podcast](#), 11/7/24) MINUTE: 28:45-31:39

MILITARY PRACTICES & AMERICA'S ROLE IN GLOBAL CONFLICTS

Hegseth Supports A Strong & Aggressive Military

"Department Of War"

In His Latest Book, "The War On Warriors," Published In 2024, Hegseth Called On America's Next Commander In Chief To Shift The Military's Focus, Beginning By Reverting The Department Of Defense To Its Pre-1947 Name, The Department Of War. "In his latest book, published this summer ahead of the 2024 presidential election, Hegseth called on America's next commander in chief to shift the military's focus — beginning by reverting the Department of Defense to its pre-1947 name, the Department of War. 'The problem is that a more empathetic and effeminate military isn't a more efficient one,' he wrote in 'The War on Warriors.' He added: 'It's a more inefficient one. That puts everyone at risk. Which, again, is a really bad thing in the business of killing.'" (Missy Ryan And Evan Hill, "Trump Pentagon Pick Dismissed Military Diversity Drive, Demonized Islam," [The Washington Post](#), 11/14/24)

- **Hegseth Wrote, "The Problem Is That A More Empathetic And Effeminate Military Isn't A More Efficient One, ... It's A More Inefficient One. That Puts Everyone At Risk. Which, Again, Is A Really Bad Thing In The Business Of Killing."** "In his latest book, published this summer ahead of the 2024 presidential election, Hegseth called on America's next commander in chief to shift the military's focus — beginning by reverting the Department of Defense to its pre-1947 name, the Department of War. 'The problem is that a more empathetic and effeminate military isn't a more efficient one,' he wrote in 'The War on Warriors.' He added: 'It's a more inefficient one. That puts everyone at risk. Which, again, is a really bad thing in the business of killing.'" (Missy Ryan And Evan Hill, "Trump Pentagon Pick Dismissed Military Diversity Drive, Demonized Islam," [The Washington Post](#), 11/14/24)

Supports Aggressive Measures

VIDEO: Hegseth Suggested Trump Should Take Further Action Against Iran After The President Ordered A Drone Strike In January 2020 That Killed Iranian Commander Qasem Soleimani.

"Hegseth also pushed Trump to take further action against Iran after the president ordered a drone strike in January 2020 that killed Iranian commander Qasem Soleimani. In a Fox News segment, Hegseth suggested Trump should take further action by targeting cultural sites that may harbor dangerous weapons – a violation of both international law and the Department of Defense's policy. 'If we want to defeat them, we have to think smart about how we navigate within these rules, without playing a game rigged to help them,' he said in January 2020. 'I don't want to hit cultural sites on purpose. If you are using one to harbor your most dangerous weapons, that should be on the list.'" (Em Steck And Andrew Kaczynski, "Hegseth Has A History Of Supporting Controversial Policies Involving The Military," [CNN](#), 12/3/24)

VIDEO: In A 2016 Fox News Segment, Hegseth Suggested Trump Should Take Further Action By Targeting Cultural Sites That May Harbor Dangerous Weapons, Which Would Be A Violation Of Both International Law And The Department Of Defense's Policy. HEGSETH: "Hegseth also

pushed Trump to take further action against Iran after the president ordered a drone strike in January 2020 that killed Iranian commander Qasem Soleimani. In a Fox News segment, Hegseth suggested Trump should take further action by targeting cultural sites that may harbor dangerous weapons – a violation of both international law and the Department of Defense’s policy. ‘If we want to defeat them, we have to think smart about how we navigate within these rules, without playing a game rigged to help them,’ he said in January 2020. ‘I don’t want to hit cultural sites on purpose. If you are using one to harbor your most dangerous weapons, that should be on the list.’” (Em Steck And Andrew Kaczynski, “Hegseth Has A History Of Supporting Controversial Policies Involving The Military,” [CNN](#), 12/3/24; [Fox News](#), 4/11/16)

Like Trump, Hegseth Has Also Praised Waterboarding As An “Effective” Tactic, Saying Said It Was “Absolutely A Mistake” To Take Waterboarding Off The Table In 2016 And Said The President Had The Power To Bring It Back. “Like Trump, Hegseth has also praised waterboarding as an ‘effective’ tactic. He said it was ‘absolutely a mistake’ to take waterboarding off the table in 2016 and said the president had the power to bring it back. ‘If it’s gonna keep us safe, all it would take is an executive order by the next president to change that law,’ Hegseth said in 2016. Congress codified a ban on waterboarding in 2015.” (Em Steck And Andrew Kaczynski, “Hegseth Has A History Of Supporting Controversial Policies Involving The Military,” [CNN](#), 12/3/24)

Global Conflicts

Russia

VIDEO: In November 2024, Hegseth Said He Was Concerned About Nuclear War "In A General Sense I Guess," But He Found The Fear That Vladimir Putin's Attack On Ukraine Was Going To Lead To Nuclear War Or War Across The Continent To Be Overinflated. SHAWN RYAN: "Are you concerned about nuclear war?" HEGSETH: I mean yes in a general sense, I guess. I just I found overinflated from the beginning this idea that Vladimir Putin's attack on Ukraine was going to lead to nuclear war or war across the continent. I've always felt like it was from the beginning, like a couple days in, like this feels like the Putin's give me my shit back war. It kind of feels like, 'I feel like you've been pushing pretty hard and we used to have the former Soviet Union and we're pretty proud of that and Ukraine was a part of it and all these other countries, I want my shit back. And I think I'm at the right time where I'm powerful enough to do it and you're not quite on my border yet and Biden's AWOL so I'm going for it and just like I did under my minor incursion under Obama I got what I could I got Crimea, now I waited under Trump now I'm going to get my.'" (Pete Hegseth - Secretary of Defense Nominee | SRS #143, [Shawn Ryan Show Podcast](#), 11/7/24) MINUTE 1:26:20

- **Hegseth Said He Believed Putin Was Focused Primarily On Ukraine And Was Not Going To Keep Trying To Go And Get All The Way To Places Like Poland.** HEGSETH: "And this idea that I hear all the time and I've friends who would probably agree with us on most things they're like well if you don't stop him in Ukraine then he's going to go all the way to Poland, he's going to. I don't I don't think he's I mean maybe in a perfect world where he had unlimited capabilities, and he could crown himself King of Europe he would. I think he's probably knows enough to know that probably not going much further than Ukraine. And I don't think he's a suicidal maniac who's hellbent on bringing in Armageddon through nuclear warfare." (Pete Hegseth - Secretary of Defense Nominee | SRS #143, [Shawn Ryan Show Podcast](#), 11/7/24) MINUTE 1:26:20

Hegseth Said It's Great If Ukraine Can Defend Themselves, But That He Does Not Want American Intervention Driving Deep Into Europe And Making Putin Feel Like He's So Much On His Heels That Then He Does Have To Turn To Nuclear War. HEGSETH: "And I don't think he's a suicidal maniac who's hellbent on bringing in Armageddon through nuclear warfare. So I, if Ukraine can defend against defend themselves from that great. But I don't want American intervention driving deep into Europe and making him feel like he's so much on his heels that then he does have to. Because early on he was talking about nukes if you remember there was this oh we have to use nuclear weapons here or there. So, I mean I'd be interested in your thoughts on that, but it's not current." (Pete Hegseth - Secretary of Defense Nominee | SRS #143, [Shawn Ryan Show Podcast](#), 11/7/24) MINUTE 1:26:20

Iran

VIDEO: Hegseth Said He Is Concerned About Iran Having Nuclear Weapons And Talked About The Threat Of Radical Islamists. HEGSETH: "I mean, I guess if I'm thinking nukes too the other part that concerned me is Iran have nuclear weapons and I, that, was always a bright line for us because nuclear weapons in the hands of radical Islamists whether it's the Sunni stripe or Shia stripe who believe their martyrdom rhetoric, the extent to which they do, changes the whole calculation. Like if Al-Qaeda had a nuke what would they do with it? They would use it. Because the Mullas in Iran, in Tehran do they really believe that you know 70,000 Martyrs in Iran is worth the destruction of Israel?

I don't know but should we find out? Or that destruction of United States or a major American city so I've taken very seriously for a long time this idea that we can't tolerate an Iranian Bomb." (Pete Hegseth - Secretary of Defense Nominee | SRS #143, [Shawn Ryan Show Podcast](#), 11/7/24)

- **Hegseth Said He's Taken Very Seriously For A Long Time The Idea That We Can't Tolerate An Iranian Bomb.** HEGSETH: "Because the Mullas in Iran, in Tehran do they really believe that you know 70,000 Martyrs in Iran is worth the destruction of Israel? I don't know but should we find out? Or that destruction of United States or a major American city so I've taken very seriously for a long time this idea that we can't tolerate an Iranian bomb." (Pete Hegseth - Secretary of Defense Nominee | SRS #143, [Shawn Ryan Show Podcast](#), 11/7/24)

China

In November 2014, Hegseth Spoke About The Threats China Poses To The U.S. And Said That China Probably Has More People Attempting To Cross The Border Than Terrorist Organizations.

HEGSETH: "That's the, yes the threat of our border, by the way China probably has more people here. As many or more than these terrorist organizations planting. ... And they have a grand plan and a grand strategy, and they believe the whole 20th century was anti-Chinese, the whole security architecture from NATO to the World Bank to everything exists to serve America's interests, which in some parts they did exist to serve the interest of the winner. All those institutions of course have been totally corrupted and all of that but originally, they were meant to create a strategic architecture that reinforced the dominance of the West. So, they come they reject all of those things and they are seeking to the only way they can implement a structure that's serves them is by defeating us and they know that and they're ambitious enough. The leaders Xi Jinping and others in the in the CCP to put in a plan to do it. And we I mean we're too busy and then and then we not only do we not do anything about it but we let in TikTok where they can trans our kids and they don't trans their kids." (Pete Hegseth - Secretary of Defense Nominee | SRS #143, [Shawn Ryan Show Podcast](#), 11/7/24) MINUTE: 1:23:23-1:25:49-1:25:50

Hegseth Said The U.S. Is Not Doing Anything To Stop China And The CCP, Pointing To Allowing TikTok, Saying "I Mean We're Too Busy And Then We, Not Only Do We Not Do Anything About, It But We Let In TikTok Where They Can Trans Our Kids And They Don't Trans Their Kids."

HEGSETH: "So, they come they reject all of those things and they are seeking to the only way they can implement a structure that's serves them is by defeating us and they know that and they're ambitious enough. The leaders Xi Jinping and others in the in the CCP to put in a plan to do it. And we I mean we're too busy and then and then we not only do we not do anything about it but we let in TikTok where they can trans our kids and they don't trans their kids." (Pete Hegseth - Secretary of Defense Nominee | SRS #143, [Shawn Ryan Show Podcast](#), 11/7/24) MINUTE: 1:23:23-1:25:49-1:25:50

International Institutions

Hegseth Has Criticized International Institutions Like The United Nations As A "Farce" And "Giant Joke" While Advocating A Military Policy That Aims To End Long-Term Conflicts Through Decisive Action. "He has also criticized international institutions like the United Nations as a 'farce' and 'giant joke' while advocating a military policy that aims to end long-term conflicts through decisive action. 'We expect this clinically sanitized, you know, no civilian casualties. Everything's going to be perfect. No one's going to get hurt, everything. It's just not how war operates, and that's unfortunate,' Hegseth said on 'The Way I Heard It with Mike Rowe' podcast. 'But if we try to

do it with kid gloves or with surgical gloves, we're never really going to get rid of, actually exterminate the enemies that we need to defeat to create a peace on the other side.'" (Peter Charalambous, "Pete Hegseth's Plan To Overhaul America's Military: 'You Need To Fire A Ton Of Generals'," [ABC News](#), 11/14/24)

PARDONS OF ACCUSED WAR CRIMINALS

Hegseth Advocated For Pardons Of Accused War Criminals

In 2019, Hegseth Played A Significant Role In Successfully Advocating For Presidential Pardons For Service Members Accused Or Convicted Of War Crimes

In 2019, Hegseth Played An Influential Role In Advocating For Trump To Intervene On Behalf Of Service Members In Three Cases Involving War Crime Accusations. "Hegseth, a military veteran, staunch defender of Trump's "America First" agenda, and an outspoken critic of what he calls the military's 'woke' culture, has built a career around challenging the military establishment. He held an influential role in advocating for Trump to intervene on behalf of service members in three cases involving war crime accusations in 2019—cases that divided the military and ignited fierce debates over the limits of executive power and military accountability." (Nik Popli, "Pete Hegseth's Role In Trump's Controversial Pardons Of Men Accused Of War Crimes," [Time](#), 11/13/24)

In December 2018, Then-President Trump Said He Was Looking At Reviewing The Cases And Cited Hegseth And Fox News In His Statement. (Pete Hegseth, [X](#), 12/16/18)



Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump

...

At the request of many, I will be reviewing the case of a "U.S. Military hero," Major Matt Golsteyn, who is charged with murder. He could face the death penalty from our own government after he admitted to killing a Terrorist bomb maker while overseas. [@PeteHegseth](#) [@FoxNews](#)

10:03 AM · Dec 16, 2018

The Cases Divided The Military And Ignited Fierce Debates Over The Limits Of Executive Power And Military Accountability. "Hegseth, a military veteran, staunch defender of Trump's 'America First' agenda, and an outspoken critic of what he calls the military's 'woke' culture, has built a career around challenging the military establishment. He held an influential role in advocating for Trump to intervene on behalf of service members in three cases involving war crime accusations in 2019—cases that divided the military and ignited fierce debates over the limits of executive power and military accountability." (Nik Popli, "Pete Hegseth's Role In Trump's Controversial Pardons Of Men Accused Of War Crimes," [Time](#), 11/13/24)

During Trump's First Term In Office, Hegseth Lobbied For The Pardons Of Army Lieutenant Clint Lorance And Army Major Mathew Golsteyn, And Pushed To Support Navy SEAL Edward Gallagher, Each Of Whom Were Facing Charges Or Convictions Related To Alleged War Crimes Committed In Iraq And Afghanistan. "During Trump's first term in office, Hegseth lobbied for the pardons of Army Lieutenant Clint Lorance and Army Major Mathew Golsteyn, and pushed to support Navy SEAL Edward Gallagher, each of whom were facing charges or convictions related to alleged

war crimes committed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Hegseth's advocacy on behalf of the three service members appeared to pay off: in Nov. 2019, Trump granted pardons to Lorange and Golsteyn, and reversed a demotion of Gallagher, citing Hegseth and Fox News when he tweeted about his decision to review one of the cases." (Nik Popli, "Pete Hegseth's Role In Trump's Controversial Pardons Of Men Accused Of War Crimes," [Time](#), 11/13/24)

- **Lorange Had Been Convicted By A Military Court In 2013 For The Murder Of Two Afghan Men During A Military Operation In 2012 In Which He Ordered His Soldiers To Open Fire On A Group Of Unarmed Afghan Civilians He Suspected Of Being Insurgents.** "Lorange had been convicted by a military court in 2013 for the murder of two Afghan men during a military operation in 2012 in which he ordered his soldiers to open fire on a group of unarmed Afghan civilians he suspected of being insurgents. Lorange served six years of a 19-year sentence before Trump, after lobbying from Hegseth and others, granted him a pardon in Nov. 2019, arguing that he was unfairly targeted by military prosecutors and that his actions were justified in a combat environment where split-second decisions were often necessary for survival." (Nik Popli, "Pete Hegseth's Role In Trump's Controversial Pardons Of Men Accused Of War Crimes," [Time](#), 11/13/24)
- **Golsteyn, A Former Green Beret, Was Accused Of Murdering An Unarmed Afghan Man In 2010 During A CIA Interview, A Suspect He Believed Was Responsible For Killing U.S. Troops.** "Golsteyn, a former Green Beret, was accused of murdering an unarmed Afghan man in 2010, a suspect he believed was responsible for killing U.S. troops. Although Golsteyn had been awarded the Silver Star for his actions in Afghanistan, he later admitted to killing the suspect during a CIA interview, which prompted an investigation and the eventual charges against him. Trump granted him a pardon in Nov. 2019 after Hegseth interviewed Golsteyn on his show." (Nik Popli, "Pete Hegseth's Role In Trump's Controversial Pardons Of Men Accused Of War Crimes," [Time](#), 11/13/24)
- **Gallagher Was Charged By The Navy With Multiple Crimes, Including Shooting Civilians In Iraq, Using A Knife To Kill A Teenage Islamic State Prisoner In Iraq In 2017, And Threatening To Kill Fellow Seals If They Reported Him.** "Gallagher was charged by the Navy with multiple crimes, including shooting civilians in Iraq, using a knife to kill a teenage Islamic State prisoner in Iraq in 2017, and threatening to kill fellow SEALs if they reported him. Gallagher was acquitted of murder by a military jury but convicted on one count of posing for photographs with the deceased body. His rank was reduced by one step as punishment. Trump reversed Gallagher's demotion, restoring his rank and benefits." (Nik Popli, "Pete Hegseth's Role In Trump's Controversial Pardons Of Men Accused Of War Crimes," [Time](#), 11/13/24)

In November 2019, Trump Granted Pardons To Lorange And Golsteyn, And Reversed A Demotion Of Gallagher, Citing Hegseth And Fox News When He Tweeted About His Decision To Review One Of The Cases. "During Trump's first term in office, Hegseth lobbied for the pardons of Army Lieutenant Clint Lorange and Army Major Mathew Golsteyn, and pushed to support Navy SEAL Edward Gallagher, each of whom were facing charges or convictions related to alleged war crimes committed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Hegseth's advocacy on behalf of the three service members appeared to pay off: in Nov. 2019, Trump granted pardons to Lorange and Golsteyn, and reversed a demotion of Gallagher, citing Hegseth and Fox News when he tweeted about his decision to review one of the cases." (Nik Popli, "Pete Hegseth's Role In Trump's Controversial Pardons Of Men Accused Of War Crimes," [Time](#), 11/13/24)

Hegseth's Vocal Defense Of The Men As Victims Of Overzealous Prosecution Raised Eyebrows In The Military Community, Where Such Interventions By Civilians Were Seen By Some As A Threat To The Integrity Of The Justice System. "Hegseth's vocal defense of these men as victims of overzealous prosecution raised eyebrows in the military community, where such interventions by civilians are seen by some as a threat to the integrity of the justice system. 'These are men who went into the most dangerous places on earth with a job to defend us and made tough calls on a moment's notice,' Hegseth said on Fox & Friends in May 2019. 'They're not war criminals, they're warriors.'" (Nik Popli, "Pete Hegseth's Role In Trump's Controversial Pardons Of Men Accused Of War Crimes," [Time](#), 11/13/24)

- **HEGSETH: "These Are Men Who Went Into The Most Dangerous Places On Earth With A Job To Defend Us And Made Tough Calls On A Moment's Notice, ... They're Not War Criminals, They're Warriors."** (Nik Popli, "Pete Hegseth's Role In Trump's Controversial Pardons Of Men Accused Of War Crimes," [Time](#), 11/13/24)

CONTROVERSIAL RHETORIC

Critical Comments Towards Muslims

A Former Employee At Concerned Veterans For America Claimed He Heard Hegseth Drunkenly Chanting "Kill All Muslims" At A Bar In 2015

In A Complaint That Was Sent To Concerned Veterans For America In Late 2015, A Former Employee Described Hegseth Being At A Bar In The Early-Morning Hours Of May 29, 2015, While On An Official Tour Through Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, Drunkenly Chanting "Kill All Muslims! Kill All Muslims!" "The report also says that Hegseth, who was married at the time, and other members of his management team sexually pursued the organization's female staffers, whom they divided into two groups—the "party girls" and the "not party girls." In addition, the report asserts that, under Hegseth's leadership, the organization became a hostile workplace that ignored serious accusations of impropriety, including an allegation made by a female employee that another employee on Hegseth's staff had attempted to sexually assault her at the Louisiana strip club. In a separate letter of complaint, which was sent to the organization in late 2015, a different former employee described Hegseth being at a bar in the early-morning hours of May 29, 2015, while on an official tour through Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, drunkenly chanting "Kill All Muslims! Kill All Muslims!"

(Jane Mayer, "Pete Hegseth's Secret History," [The New Yorker](#), 12/1/24)

Hegseth Has Been A Harsh And Vocal Critic Of Islam

In His 2020 Book "American Crusade," Hegseth Rages Against Muslim Birth Rates And What He Characterizes As The Infiltration Of American Communities By Refugees And Migrants Whom He Accuses Of Leeching Off Government Support. "Islam, he writes, has been 'almost entirely captured and leveraged by Islamists.' The 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." (Missy Ryan And Evan Hill, "Trump Pentagon Pick Dismissed Military Diversity Drive, Demonized Islam," [The Washington Post](#), 11/14/24)

- **Hegseth Wrote That Islam "Is Not A Religion Of Peace, And It Never Has Been" And Claims That "All Modern Muslim Countries Are Either Formal Or De Facto No-Go Zones For**

Practicing Christians And Jews.” “Islam, he writes, has been ‘almost entirely captured and leveraged by Islamists.’ The 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.” (Missy Ryan And Evan Hill, “Trump Pentagon Pick Dismissed Military Diversity Drive, Demonized Islam,” [The Washington Post](#), 11/14/24)

Hegseth Wrote That Islamists Plan To “Conquer” Europe And America Demographically, Culturally And Politically, Allying With Secularism To Tear Down “Our Nation’s Judeo-Christian Institutions.” “Supported by open-borders leftists and ‘squish’ Republicans, he says, Islamists plan to ‘conquer’ Europe and America demographically, culturally and politically, allying with secularism to tear down ‘our nation’s Judeo-Christian institutions.’ They will ‘seed the West with as many Muslims as possible’ and then, ‘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.’” (Missy Ryan And Evan Hill, “Trump Pentagon Pick Dismissed Military Diversity Drive, Demonized Islam,” [The Washington Post](#), 11/14/24)

In His Book In “American Crusade”, Hegseth Points 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. “Looking toward Europe, Hegseth points in ‘American Crusade’ 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. Though insulated by distance and its ‘traditional Christian fabric,’ the United States, Hegseth writes, is under a cultural invasion ‘not just at our shore, it’s in your community and schools.’ In November 2019, his book states, 26 Muslim candidates won elected office in the country, and ‘Muhammad is now a top ten boys’ name in America.’” (Missy Ryan And Evan Hill, “Trump Pentagon Pick Dismissed Military Diversity Drive, Demonized Islam,” [The Washington Post](#), 11/14/24)

POLITICAL ISSUES

Early Critic Of Trump

During The 2016 Presidential Election, Hegseth Initially Supported Marco Rubio And Ted Cruz, Harshly Criticized Trump’s Grasp Of National Security Issues, And Called Him An “Armchair Tough Guy” For Deferring The Draft

During The 2016 Presidential Election, Hegseth Initially Supported Republican Marco Rubio And Ted Cruz And Harshly Criticized Trump’s Grasp Of National Security Issues And For Saying That He Got His Military Advice From People Like Himself On Fox News. “During the 2016 presidential election, Hegseth initially supported Republican Sens. Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz. He harshly criticized Trump’s grasp of national security issues and for saying that he got his military advice from people like himself on Fox News. ‘You wouldn’t want a top-tier presidential candidate getting all of their military advice from watching “Meet the Press.” There’s a lot more nuance. There’s a lot more detail,’ Hegseth said in August 2015. ‘Foreign policy, national security is not about TV shows. [The campaign is] going to have to walk back a little bit from this idea that he gets

it from the political shows.'” (Em Steck And Andrew Kaczynski, “Hegseth Has A History Of Supporting Controversial Policies Involving The Military,” [CNN](#), 12/3/24)

Before Trump Secured The 2016 Republican Nomination, Hegseth Also Attacked Him For His Five Draft Deferrals During The Vietnam War, Calling Him An “Armchair Tough Guy.” “Before Trump secured the 2016 Republican nomination, Hegseth also attacked him for his five draft deferments during the Vietnam War, calling him an ‘armchair tough guy.’ ‘[Trump is] all bluster, very little substance. He talks a tough game. But then when pressed he’s an armchair tough guy,’ Hegseth said on Fox News in March 2016, noting that Trump sought his ‘own five military deferments.’” (Em Steck And Andrew Kaczynski, “Hegseth Has A History Of Supporting Controversial Policies Involving The Military,” [CNN](#), 12/3/24)

STATE OF SENATE CONFIRMATION

ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

As Of December 2024, Hegseth Has Begun To Meet With Members of The Senate Armed Services Committee, With Several Members Making Positive Comments About His Nomination

Member	Party	Comments On Hegseth
Wicker, Roger F., (MS) Current Ranking Member	Republican	Met with Hegseth & said he would continue to support President Trump's nominees
Fischer, Deb (NE)	Republican	Met with him and said she had a "good conversation"
Cotton, Tom (AR)	Republican	Said he was confident Hegseth and all of Trump's nominees would get confirmed
Rounds, Mike (SD)	Republican	Met with Hegseth and said he went a long way in getting his full support, but wants him to be able to answer the questions that are out there
Ernst, Joni (IA)	Republican	Said she would support him throughout the process and deserved a fair hearing, but stopped short of saying she would vote for him
Sullivan, Dan (AK)	Republican	Met with Hegseth and said he was confident he would work to refocus the military on lethality and peace through strength, as well as get rid of the damaging woke policies
Cramer, Kevin (ND)	Republican	Said Hegseth had all the right answers to his questions. He previously said he wanted Hegseth to commit to not drinking
Scott, Rick (FL)	Republican	Called their meeting "great" and said Hegseth had his "full support"
Tuberville, Tommy (AL)	Republican	Has praised Hegseth and supports his confirmation
Mullin, Markwayne (OK)	Republican	Supports Hegseth and has dismissed drinking concerns saying, "There's a lot of alcohol that flows through Washington, DC"
Budd, Ted (NC)	Republican	Met with Hegseth
Schmitt, Eric (MO)	Republican	Met with Hegseth and said he denied misconduct allegations
Reed, Jack (RI), <i>Chairman</i>	Democrat	
Shaheen, Jeanne (NH)	Democrat	
Gillibrand, Kirsten E. (NY)	Democrat	
Blumenthal, Richard (CT)	Democrat	
Hirono, Mazie K. (HI)	Democrat	
Kaine, Tim (VA)	Democrat	
King, Angus S. (ME)	Democrat	
Warren, Elizabeth (MA)	Democrat	

Peters, Gary C. (MI)	Democrat	
Manchin, Joe (WV)	Democrat	NOTE: Retired from Congress and will not serve in 119 th Congress
Duckworth, Tammy (IL)	Democrat	
Rosen, Jacky (NV)	Democrat	
Kelly, Mark (AZ)	Democrat	

SENATE REPUBLICANS

Confirmed Supporters

Senate Support For Hegseth As Of December 10, 2024:

There Are Nine Republican Woman In The Senate, And As Of December 10, 2024, Marsha Two Have Publicly Announced Their Support Hegseth. "There are nine Republican women serving in the Senate. Two, so far, have thrown their weight behind Hegseth. GOP Sen. Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee posted her endorsement of Hegseth on Nov. 12. Speaking on Fox News, she called him a 'perfect fit to come in and reorganize' the Department of Defense." (Lalee Ibssa, Kelsey Walsh, And Soo Rin Kim, "Trump Doubles Down On Support For Hegseth, Admits He Hasn't Gotten Assurances From Senators He'll Be Confirmed," [ABC News](#), 11/6/24)

- **VIDEO: In A December 4, 2024, Fox Business Interview, Blackburn Said Hegseth "Is Doing A Terrific Job" And That She Is "Looking Forward To Standing With Him And Voting For Him For His Confirmation."** "I think Pete Hegseth is doing a terrific job. He met with some of on Monday night, and Larry he was able to lay out what he would to do modernize the U.S. Department of Defense. ... Pete Hegseth gets it. And of course he is what you would call a 'nontraditional choice' because people that are in D.C., people that are in the swamp, they want somebody who that's in the swamp to be the Secretary of every department. ... Pete is a Tennessean. We are so proud of him and we are looking forward to standing with him and voting for him for his confirmation." ("Hegseth Finds Support On Capitol Hill," [Fox Business](#), 12/4/24)
- **On December 5, 2024, Alabama Republican Sen. Katie Britt Said Hegseth Answered Her Tough Questions "With Candor And Transparency" And That Based On Their Meeting And His Answers, "He Has [Her] Support."** "Alabama Republican Sen. Katie Britt posted on Dec. 5, 'During our conversation, I asked direct questions about allegations that have been reported by the media, which Pete answered with candor and transparency. Based on our meeting and his answers, he has my support.'" (Lalee Ibssa, Kelsey Walsh, And Soo Rin Kim, "Trump Doubles Down On Support For Hegseth, Admits He Hasn't Gotten Assurances From Senators He'll Be Confirmed," [ABC News](#), 11/6/24)

On December 4, 2024, Sen. Bill Hagerty (R-TN) Said He Would Support Hegseth's Confirmation 100 Percent. "Pete Hegseth is an inspirational leader in service of our brave men and women in uniform. More and more of my Senate colleagues are learning the same after getting to know him. I support his confirmation 100%." (Bill Hagerty, [X](#), 12/4/24)

VIDEO: Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) Announced Support For Pete Hegseth As Secretary Of Defense, Saying He Would Do Away With DEI Policies In The Military. ANCHOR: "Do you think

[Hegseth] can run the Pentagon?" PAUL: "Yes, and I think the vast majority of people if you poll them will say they don't think people should be picked based on religion or gender or sexuality. They want people to be picked based on merit. One of Hegseth's criticisms of our Pentagon is that we've gone away from merit, and gone more towards racial characteristics. And so I think that the people are and would be overwhelmingly favorable of someone who's going to base hiring based on merit, not on racial characteristics." ([CBS News Face Nation](#), 11/24/24)



Eric Daugherty ✓
@EricLDaugh

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BREAKING: Senator Rand Paul announces support for Pete Hegseth as Secretary of Defense - says Hegseth will demolish DEI in the military.

ANCHOR: "Do you think [Hegseth] can run the Pentagon?"

PAUL: "Yes, and I think the vast majority [will] say they don't think people should be picked based on religion or gender or s*xuality. They want people to be picked based on merit."

"One of Hegseth's criticisms of our Pentagon is that we've gone away from merit, and gone more towards racial characteristics."

"The people would be overwhelmingly favorable of someone who's going to base hiring based on merit, not on racial characteristics."



VIDEO: Sen. Rick Scott (R-FL) Announced His Support Hegseth, Saying He Admires "People Who Are Willing To Put On The Uniform And Lead Troops Into Battle." SENATOR RICK SCOTT:

"There's not a lot of Americans that have been willing to put on the uniform and have actually led troops in battle and brought them back safely. And knows people that lost their lives, knows people that are injured. When he goes in the Department of Defense, he will walk in with the mentality that he will take care of our warfighters. He's going to make sure they have the right equipment and they're not put in harm's way when they shouldn't be put in harm's way. He's not going to support forever wars. He's not going to support going in to battle when we don't even have a plan. So, I think he's going to do a great job. I'm going to do everything I can to make sure he's confirmed as the Secretary of Defense." (Sen. Rick Scott Interview, [USA Today](#), 12/5/24)

Sen. Roger Marshall (R-MD) Announced His Support For Hegseth, Saying He Is "Qualified, Strong, And Will Transform The Department Of Defense For The Better." (Dr. Roger Marshall, [X](#), 12/9/24)



Dr. Roger Marshall
@RogerMarshallMD

Pete Hegseth has my support. He is qualified, strong, and will transform the Department of Defense for the better. @PeteHegseth will focus on recruitment efforts and lethality as the DOD should. He will be a great Secretary of Defense.



Pete Hegseth

4:30 PM · Dec 9, 2024 · 197.8K Views

Unconfirmed

As Of Mid-December 2024, Senators Are Meeting With Hegseth Every Day To Discuss His Qualifications And Vision For The Department Of Defense

On December 5, 2024, Sen. Mike Rounds (R-SD) Said Hegseth Went A Long In "Getting [His] Full Support," But Said He Wants "Him To Be Able To Answer, In Front Of Everybody Else, The Questions That Are There." "Post-Hegseth meeting, Sen. Mike Rounds (R-SD) praises DoD Sec nom but says 'he's got more work to do.' 'Pete Hegseth went a long way today, in my opinion, in getting my full support. But I want him to be able to answer, in front of everybody else, the questions that are there.'" (Ramsey Touchberry, [X](#), 12/5/24)

Senator Joni Ernst (R-IA) Who Serves On The Senate Armed Services Committee, Which Will Hold The Secretary Of Defense Nominee's Confirmation Hearing, Had Not Committed To Voting For Hegseth As Of December 6, 2024. "Ernst sits on the Senate Armed Services Committee, which will hold the secretary of defense nominee's confirmation hearing, and met with Hegseth last week. Ernst, however, has withheld committing to voting in favor of Hegseth. 'Pete Hegseth and I will continue our constructive conversations as we move forward together in this process. We plan to meet again next week. At a minimum, we agree that he deserves the opportunity to lay out his vision for our warfighters at a fair hearing.'" (Emma Colton And Cameron Cawthorne, "'Political Price To Pay': Trump Orbit Expected To Ramp Up Ernst Criticisms While She Withholds Hegseth Support," [Fox News](#), 12/8/24)

- On December 6, 2024, Ernst Said She And Hegseth Would Continue Their Constructive Conversations As They Moved Forward In This Process, Saying "At A Minimum, We Agree That He Deserves The Opportunity To Lay Out His Vision For Our Warfighters At A Fair Hearing." "Pete Hegseth and I will continue our constructive conversations as we move forward together in this process. We plan to meet again next week. At a minimum, we agree that he deserves the opportunity to lay out his vision for our warfighters at a fair hearing." (Sen Joni Ernst, [X](#), 12/6/24)



Joni Ernst ✓
@SenJoniErnst

...

Pete Hegseth and I will continue our constructive conversations as we move forward together in this process. We plan to meet again next week.

At a minimum, we agree that he deserves the opportunity to lay out his vision for our warfighters at a fair hearing.

5:47 PM · Dec 6, 2024 · 5.4M Views

- **After Meeting With Hegseth Again On December 9, 2024, Ernst Said She Would Support Him Through The Process And Looked Forward To "A Fair Hearing Based On Truth, Not Anonymous Sources."** "U.S. Senator Joni Ernst (R-Iowa), a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and a combat veteran, issued the following statement: 'I appreciate Pete Hegseth's responsiveness and respect for the process. Following our encouraging conversations, Pete committed to completing a full audit of the Pentagon and selecting a senior official who will uphold the roles and value of our servicemen and women — based on quality and standards, not quotas — and who will prioritize and strengthen my work to prevent sexual assault within the ranks. As I support Pete through this process, I look forward to a fair hearing based on truth, not anonymous sources.'" (Sen. Joni Ernst, Ernst Statement On Pete Hegseth," [Press Release](#), 12/9/24)

Some Female Republican Senators Have Expressed Reservations Or Are Holding Off On Offering A Formal Stance Until They Learn More About Hegseth. "Sen. Marsha Blackburn, R-Tenn., was publicly supportive of Hegseth on Fox News. She called him a 'perfect fit to come in and reorganize' the Department of Defense. The rest have reservations or are holding off on offering a formal stance until they learn more about the nominee. Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va., said she was 'undecided.' Sen. Deb Fischer, R-Neb., only said she had a 'good conversation' with him this week and Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, said she was 'obviously' concerned about some of the allegations against him." (Lalee Ibssa, Kelsey Walsh, And Soo Rin Kim, "Trump Doubles Down On Support For Hegseth, Admits He Hasn't Gotten Assurances From Senators He'll Be Confirmed," [ABC News](#), 11/6/24)

- **Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), Said She Was "Undecided," Sen. Deb Fischer (R-NE), Only Said She Had A "Good Conversation" With Him, And Sen. Susan Collins (R-Me), Said She Was "Obviously" Concerned About Some Of The Allegations Against Him.** "Sen. Marsha Blackburn, R-Tenn., was publicly supportive of Hegseth on Fox News. She called him a 'perfect fit to come in and reorganize' the Department of Defense. The rest have reservations or are holding off on offering a formal stance until they learn more about the nominee. Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va., said she was 'undecided.' Sen. Deb Fischer, R-Neb., only said she had a 'good conversation' with him this week and Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, said she was 'obviously' concerned about some of the allegations against him." (Lalee Ibssa, Kelsey Walsh, And Soo Rin Kim, "Trump Doubles Down On Support For Hegseth, Admits He Hasn't Gotten Assurances From Senators He'll Be Confirmed," [ABC News](#), 11/6/24)

DEMOCRATS

Strong Opposition

VIDEO: In November 2024, Sen. Blumenthal (D-CT) Said He Believed Hegseth's Nomination Was "Doomed." "On whether Trump's team should have done more vetting for his key Cabinet picks. 'Well the more you do up front, the less you have to do on the back end,' GOP Sen. Thom Tillis told us. Democratic Sen. Dick Blumenthal believes Hegseth nomination is 'doomed'" ([CNN](#), 11/21/24)