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Congress of the United States
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HOUSE PERMANENT SELECT
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON
INTELLIGENCE AND
SPECIAL OPERATIONS

August 12, 2026

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Hegseth,

I write regarding serious concerns that recent reporting by *The New York Times* calls into question the veracity of testimony you provided before the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) earlier this year with respect to the influence of your special adviser, Timothy Parlatore, on the promotions of senior officials in the United States military.

On April 29, 2026, you appeared before HASC to provide testimony on the Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2027 budget request. During that hearing, I asked you about potential ethical and organizational conflicts of interest regarding Mr. Parlatore, who currently serves in your office as a special adviser. While serving in this position, Mr. Parlatore still maintains a private legal practice. In response to my questions about whether Mr. Parlatore represents any senior officers under consideration for promotion, you denied it on all occasions.

According to recent reporting, Mr. Parlatore has reportedly played an influential role in advising on senior military promotions and personnel decisions within the Pentagon.¹ If accurate, this arrangement raises significant questions about potential conflicts of interest, adherence to federal ethics standards, and the integrity and impartiality of the military's promotion system. Further, when questioned before HASC regarding Mr. Parlatore's possible involvement in senior military promotions, you stated that he played no role in those decisions.² The reporting appears to contradict your statements before HASC, raising serious concerns about the credibility and accuracy of your testimony.

According to the article, Mr. Parlatore played a significant role in the process leading to Admiral Daryl Caudle's selection as the Navy's 34th Chief of Naval Operations (CNO). However, while serving in your office, Mr. Parlatore represented Admiral Caudle in a matter pertaining to an ongoing Office of the Inspector General (OIG) investigation, clearing the way for his nomination. Meanwhile, Mr. Parlatore was apparently actively involved in discussions surrounding Admiral Caudle's promotion. According to the public reporting, Mr. Parlatore spoke to you about selecting Admiral Caudle as the next CNO, and you directed your staff to consult with Mr. Parlatore about Admiral Caudle's position within the military.

It appears that Mr. Parlatore's involvement extended well beyond that of a special adviser and into matters traditionally reserved for Department leadership and established military personnel processes. These serious allegations raise questions regarding the scope of Mr. Parlatore's authority and the role he plays in

¹ Greg Jaffe & Kate Kelly, An Admiral's Rise Reveals the Politics Driving Hegseth's Pentagon, N.Y. Times, July 26, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/07/26/us/politics/caudle-navy-hegseth-parlatore-promotion.htm>

² Jason Crow, Crow Presses Secretary Pete Hegseth Over Defense Department Corruption, Conflicts of Interest, Press Release (Apr. 30, 2026), <https://crow.house.gov/media/press-releases/crow-presses-secretary-pete-hegseth-over-defense-department-corruption-conflicts-of-interest>

recommending or influencing promotions of senior military officers. These allegations also raise concerns that appropriate ethics safeguards and personnel procedures are not being followed and that your testimony before HASC may not have been complete or accurate. Given these concerns, I request that you provide a written response no later than September 10, 2026, clarifying your testimony and remedying any inconsistencies.

I would also remind you of your legal obligation to preserve all documents, communications, and electronically stored information that may be relevant to these issues. As Secretary of Defense, you are obligated to ensure compliance with all applicable federal records preservation requirements. The Federal Records Act requires the Department of Defense to create and preserve records documenting official government business, including communications, directives, deliberations, and decision-making related to the Department's operations.³ These obligations extend to records regardless of format, including emails, text messages, encrypted messaging applications, and other electronic communications.

I look forward to your timely response and expect it to provide the transparency and accountability that these matters demand.

Sincerely,



Jason Crow
Member of Congress

³ See 44 U.S.C. §§ 3101, *et seq.*