

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

September 23, 2026

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Hegseth:

We write in response to recent reporting that at least a dozen transgender troops have not received the separation funds they are owed.¹ This is unacceptable and appears to be another broken promise by this Administration to those who have served.

Since the beginning of this Administration, you and President Trump have targeted transgender servicemembers—not only kicking them out of the military but also subjecting them to constant indignities along the way. President Trump has falsely stated that being transgender is incompatible “with a soldier’s commitment to an honorable, truthful, and disciplined lifestyle.”

Under the trans military ban, the Services have been forced to ignore the sacrifice, years of service, and contributions by transgender service members. Some servicemembers were approved—and then rejected for—early retirement benefits. As we fight a war in Iran that has resulted in nearly 800 troops being injured,² the Pentagon continues to waste valuable time and resources on scouring through servicemembers’ confidential medical records in order to identify transgender service members for separation.³

As you know, 10 U.S.C. § 1175a and DoDI 1332.44 authorize and establish procedures for voluntary separation pay and benefits and 10 U.S.C. § 1174 and DoDI 1332.29 authorize and establish procedures for involuntary separation pay. Further, DoD’s guidance for implementing the transgender military ban stated that “Service members eligible for voluntary separation pay will be paid at a rate that is twice the amount the Service member would have been eligible for involuntary separation pay” and that “Service members separated involuntarily pursuant to this policy may be provided full involuntary separation pay in accordance.”⁴ The Washington Post

¹ Casey Parks, *A trans veteran became homeless after the military didn’t pay her severance*, WASH. POST (Aug. 30, 2026), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2026/08/30/trans-veteran-became-homeless-after-military-didnt-pay-her-severance/>.

² Nicholas Slayton, *Dozens more troops added to tally of wounded in Iran war amid new strikes*, TASK & PURPOSE (Sept. 4, 2026), <https://taskandpurpose.com/news/iran-war-nearly-800-wounded/>.

³ Rachel S. Cohen, *Pentagon searching medical records to identify transgender troops*, FEDERAL NEWS NETWORK (Sept. 7, 2026), <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/defense-main/2026/09/pentagon-searching-medical-records-to-identify-transgender-troops/>.

⁴ *Additional Guidance on Prioritizing Military Excellence and Readiness*, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Feb. 26, 2025) https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Spotlight/2025/Guidance_For_Federal_Policies/

has identified at least a dozen transgender service members who did not receive their full separation pay in a timely fashion, including an Army National Guardsman with twin 3-year-olds who is waiting for a \$130,000 check, an Air Force major who flew search-and-rescue helicopters who was supposed to receive \$340,000, and a Texas National Guard who is still owed more than \$66,000.⁵

Let us be clear: we strongly oppose the underlying transgender military ban. The House of Representatives recently rejected, on a bipartisan vote, an attempt to codify this ban into law, and we hope the Courts will permanently block this ban from being carried out against any transgender person who would and could be serving but for this ban. In the meantime, transgender servicemembers should receive the separation pay they are owed in a timely fashion—and we urge you to ensure this is handled expeditiously.

In order to better understand how separation pay is being handled, we request your responses by no later than October 14, 2026, to the following:

1. For each military branch, please provide the following calculations for servicemembers who were separated from the Armed Forces between January 20, 2025, and September 23, 2026, and were eligible for separation pay:
 - a. The average and median number of days it took following their separation for servicemembers to receive their separation pay in full.
 - b. For servicemembers who were separated pursuant to Executive Order No. 14183 and its implementing regulations and/or branch guidance, the average and median number of days it took following their separation for them to receive their separation pay in full.
 - c. For all other servicemembers (i.e. those who were not separated pursuant to Executive Order No. 14183 and its implementing regulations and/or branch guidance), the average and median number of days it took following their separation for them to receive their separation pay in full.
2. Please provide anonymized data for every servicemember who was eligible for separation pay and has been separated pursuant to Executive Order No. 14183 and its implementing regulations that includes the following:
 - a. Whether they were voluntary or involuntary separated;
 - b. The total amount of separation pay they were owed;
 - c. The amount of separation pay they have received;
 - d. The date each payment was received;
 - e. The number of days between their date of separation and when they received their first payment of separation pay;
 - f. The number of days between their date of separation and when they received their separation pay in full; and

[Prioritizing Military Excellence and Readiness P&R Guidance.pdf](#).

⁵ Parks *supra* n. 1.

- g. For those who have not received their separation pay in full, the total amount outstanding and the date by which DoD expects that individual to receive all outstanding payments.
3. Please provide a copy of all guidance and communications relating to the processing of separation pay for servicemembers separated pursuant to Executive Order No. 14183 and its implementing regulations.

Sincerely,



Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



Sarah McBride
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Mark Takano
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



Eric Sorensen
Member of Congress



Everton Blair Jr.
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