

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 20, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

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

Dear President Trump and Secretary Hegseth:

We write today as Veteran Members of Congress to demand that you immediately reverse policies that seek to erase records of the historic accomplishments of our troops. We are concerned about reports that the Department of Defense (DoD) has pulled down webpages highlighting heroes across our Armed Services who happen to be women, people of color or members of the LGBTQ+ community. We understand that these efforts stem from a February 26, 2025, memorandum entitled, "Digital Content Refresh," that directed components to scrub DoD online platforms of content that "promote[s] Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion," which resulted in the erasure of important American stories of heroism of current and past servicemembers.

We object to the Department removing from the public record stories that feature extraordinary achievements of warriors and Veterans. Webpages that we understand have been removed include stories about record-breaking combat flight hours by female aviators; historical contributions of Native American servicemembers such as Navajo Code Talkers during World War II; medal recipients within segregated combat units during the World Wars; and numerous other wartime sacrifices by Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen. We find it especially unacceptable that Arlington National Cemetery has purged webpages directing visitors who wish to pay respects to the gravesites of honorable Veterans, including those who died in combat or after decades of service to the nation, or want to learn about the history of civil rights in the military, a movement that greatly strengthened the cohesion and effectiveness of the military.

We urge you to promptly reverse these indiscriminate, sweeping actions seeking to erase the legacy of our servicemembers. Removing these records exacerbates an already concerning recruiting crisis, undermines morale across the Joint Force and betrays our Nation's commitment to honoring the service of Veterans.

First, by removing the records of Americans who bravely answered the call to serve our country in uniform, these short-sighted actions discourage eligible Americans from volunteering to serve

and send a message that they will not be welcomed in the Armed Forces. Instead of purging these stories, we should be celebrating heroes who have made our military stronger, allowing them to inspire the next generation to serve and defend our nation.

Second, through these actions, your administration is contributing to division within the ranks and undermining morale and cohesion, signaling to the Force that bravery only deserves to be recognized depending on who you are. We know that this just plays into the hands of adversaries who look for opportunities to divide us and undermine our military. Stoking a manufactured culture war to score political points at the expense of individual members of our Armed Forces hurts our national security.

Finally, your administration claims to support warriors and Veterans, but these needless actions undermine a basic commitment to our heroes in uniform – that their sacrifices in service of Americans will be appropriately honored and remembered. Public celebration of those military officers and enlisted servicemembers who made extraordinary contributions to the military and the American people is the least we owe them and their family, friends and communities.

We are encouraged by steps the Department has taken to reinstate some of these webpages, including the page highlighting Charles C. Rogers, the Medal of Honor recipient, and Air Force training websites related to the Tuskegee Airmen. However, we remain concerned that these efforts to correct the record are ad hoc, reactive and insufficient.

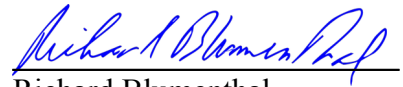
We demand that you respond to the following questions no later than April 1, 2025, and that this information be made available to the public, and particularly Veterans, who are owed accountability and transparency from the administration that represents them.

- Please provide your plan with a timeline for reinstating public digital records related to accomplishments of U.S. military servicemembers and Veterans.
 - What criteria are you using to reinstate digital content related to historical accomplishments of servicemembers or Veterans?
- What guidance have you provided components regarding requirements to archive many of these websites targeted for removal? What processes do you have in place to ensure any removal of these records complies with the Federal Records Act?
- Please detail the manhours and associated cost of executing the memo dated February 26, 2025, “Digital Content Refresh,” to purge digital content.

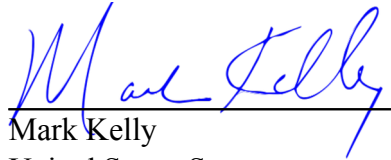
Sincerely,



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Ruben Gallego
United States Senator