

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 2, 2025

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

Mr. President,

As members of Congress who served in the military, we write to you with extreme concern over the handling of classified information about U.S. military operations by members of your administration, including Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, Vice President JD Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, NSA Mike Waltz, DNI Tulsi Gabbard, and CIA Director John Ratcliffe, among others. On March 24, 2025, Jeffrey Goldberg of the Atlantic revealed that National Security Advisor Michael Waltz had inadvertently included him in a group conversation on the commercial messaging app Signal named “Houthis PC Small Group.” In this message chain, on an unclassified commercial platform, key national security officials deliberated the decision to launch a military operation in Yemen and then discussed sensitive and classified operational details about the ongoing operation, including the exact timing, airframes, and weapons to be used.

This was a major security breach. There are appropriate and secure places and platforms that all officials are required to use to discuss sensitive and classified information without exposing it to adversaries. Signal is not the correct or DoD and IC sanctioned platform to discuss these matters. Longstanding DoD and IC policy has prohibited the use of unsecured devices and commercial apps for discussing sensitive information. In fact, on March 14, the day before the strikes, the Defense Department warned personnel about Signal’s security risks, noting that Russia was attempting to breach the app. One identified vulnerability allows an attacker with access to a user’s phone to link another device to their Signal account, enabling real-time remote message monitoring. Our adversaries would go to great lengths to get the type of information disclosed in these messages, both the operational details and the insight into this administration’s decision making on an individual principal level. Yet members of your administration tasked with our national security discussed it on an unsecured platform without even checking who was in the conversation.

Had this information been released to the public, and more critically accessed by our adversaries, it could have had catastrophic consequences and resulted in American service members being wounded, captured, or killed, and mission failure. This is not an abstract or hypothetical scenario. In 2000, a Sailor on the USS Cole sent an email to his wife outlining the USS Cole’s port call schedule. This communication was intercepted and allowed the Al Qaeda terrorists in the region to orchestrate an attack on the USS Cole. This resulted in 17 Sailors killed and 39 injured and was a direct result of poor operational security.

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

Additionally, we find it deeply concerning that not a single member of your national security team attempted to stop this conversation or remind the group not to have sensitive deliberations or discuss classified information over an unsecure channel. We expect our service members and intelligence officials, no matter how junior, to safeguard sensitive information, and act with integrity and personal courage and take responsibility for mistakes. We expect them to do the right thing, even when it's not the easy thing, including telling their peers to act with integrity. That makes it even more outrageous that senior cabinet officials displayed no integrity in the moment and have only attempted to downplay, mislead, and excuse this reckless behavior since it was exposed. This behavior provides little confidence that security measures will be appropriately rectified to prevent further unauthorized disclosures that could risk American lives, sources, and partnerships.

Even more appalling, recently published reporting indicates that Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth created another Signal messaging chat, on his personal phone, where he shared information about forthcoming strikes in Yemen that included the flight schedules for the F/A-18 Hornets targeting the Houthis. This separate chat included his wife, who is a former Fox News producer, his brother, and his personal attorney. None of these individuals have a need-to-know about ongoing sensitive military operations. This demonstrates blatant disregard for operational security protocols and recklessly endangers the mission and our service members.

To highlight Secretary Hegseth's negligence and wanton disregard for the basic safeguarding of controlled information, even more reporting came out that indicated Secretary Hegseth had an internet connection that bypassed the Pentagon's security protocol set up in his office to use the Signal messaging application on his personal computer. This unsecured internet line can expose users to hacking and malign surveillance. This is extremely unsettling and unsatisfactory behavior for the head of the Department of Defense. This demonstrates that Secretary Hegseth understood the rules and procedures and decided that these safeguards didn't apply to him, further risking our service members.

The Secretary of Defense and National Security Advisor are unarguably the most consequential jobs we have in the United States Government. The fact that top cabinet officials were discussing secret information about an ongoing operation on an unsecure messaging application is beyond the pale. We expect our service members to put their lives on the line, and if necessary, die for this country, and the Secretary of Defense is flippantly incurring additional risk onto their mission, with no real justification other than expediency and because it's easier to send a text than it is to do the right thing. We implore you to fire Mr. Hegseth on the grounds that his reckless handling of classified information put the men and women serving our nation at risk and displayed a terrible judgement that will erode confidence among service members. There has to be accountability for this. It's the right thing to do for our service members and the discipline and trust on which our military relies.

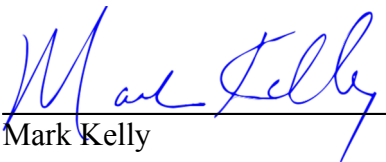
We must hold those responsible for this security breach accountable and ensure our senior leaders utilize the tools to safely and securely discuss classified information so incidents like this one never occur again. The United States Constitution requires us to provide for the common

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

defense, critical to this defense is the safeguarding of sensitive and classified information. We ask you provide us with a detailed plan on preventing future unauthorized disclosure of classified material. It is our duty to protect national security and the service members that risk their lives to defend this country.

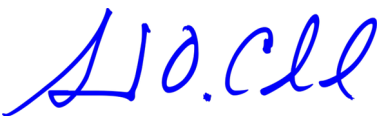
Sincerely,



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



Jason Crow
Member of Congress