

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 10, 2025

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

Dear Secretary Hegseth,

According to a U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) notification to Congress on June 9, 2025, approximately 700 Marines have been deployed in support of Task Force 51, the unit comprised of National Guard troops called into federal service by President Trump and operating in Los Angeles.¹ You explained subsequently that these “... active-duty U.S. Marines from Camp Pendleton are being deployed to Los Angeles to restore order.”²

The presence of the Marines was not requested by Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass, the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, or California Governor Gavin Newsom. Moreover, local and state law enforcement officers are carrying out their missions to protect the public amid ongoing immigration raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) personnel. We strongly oppose this deployment and request you clarify the legal authority that purports to grant the President and you the ability to deploy active-duty personnel on American streets under these circumstances.

A decision to deploy active-duty military personnel within the United States should only be undertaken during the most extreme circumstances, and these are not them. That this deployment was made over the objections of state authorities is all the more unjustifiable. In this instance, this extraordinary action was also irresponsibly rushed and lacked clear communication to government officials or the U.S. public. The notification from NORTHCOM did not provide critical information to understand the legal authority, mission, or rules of engagement for Marines involved in this domestic deployment. As such, we ask that you provide immediate answers to the following questions:

- What is the legal authority for the Marine deployment and any activity they will be authorized to undertake? Please provide any Department of Defense analysis on the legal authority for this action.

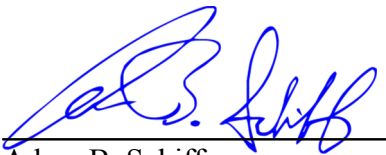
¹ President Donald J. Trump, Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, “Department of Defense Security for the Protection of Department of Homeland Security Functions,” June 7, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/06/department-of-defense-security-for-the-protection-of-department-of-homeland-security-functions>.

² Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, X, June 9, 2025, <https://x.com/secdef/status/1932202105361612994>.

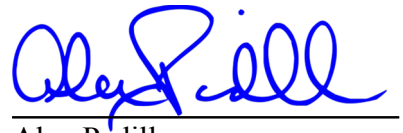
- What is the specific mission for the Marine deployment and how has that mission been communicated to the Marines?
- Will the Marines engage in, and have legal authority to engage in, law enforcement activities?
- Please also clarify any requests made of the Department of Defense by other federal entities, such as the White House and the Department of Homeland Security, regarding the scope of the Marines' mission and duties.
- What are the rules of engagement for the Marines while deployed to Los Angeles? The NORTHCOM notification indicates that "Task Force 51 forces have been trained in de-escalation, crowd control, and standing rules for the use of force." How much training was provided to the Marines involved and at what time? What crowd control equipment was issued to the Marines prior to or during their deployment, and what training have they received on proper use of that equipment? Given that the Marines, who are trained to be among the most lethal forces in the U.S. military, may have direct contact with U.S. civilians as part of the domestic deployment, please clarify the precise rules of engagement that have been provided to them or under which they are expected to operate.

Given the significant questions about the role of the Marines as part of this operation, we respectfully request answers to these questions within 48 hours or a stand down of their mobilization.

Sincerely,



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator

cc: The Honorable John Phelan, Secretary of the Navy