

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 11, 2026

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Thune,

We write to request that Senate committees of jurisdiction hold immediate public hearings with Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and other relevant Cabinet-level officials to explain to the American people why the Trump administration launched an unconstitutional war with Iran and why this expensive, escalating conflict is in America's national interest. Already, oil and gas prices are spiking, the prices of basic goods are increasing, and the U.S. is spending billions of dollars on this war, rather than focusing on reducing costs here at home. The Trump administration must answer questions publicly under oath in front of the American people, not just behind closed doors. Without public hearings, this work period, we will pursue other options for ensuring timely public debate on the Senate floor.

The Constitution is clear. Only Congress has the solemn responsibility to declare war or authorize the use of military force, absent an imminent threat to the United States, and Congress has done neither. *The War Powers Act of 1973* is also clear. It states that "the collective judgement of both the Congress and the President will apply to the introduction of United States Armed Forces into hostilities" (50 USC 1541(a)). Yet, on February 28, 2026, without Congressional authorization or consultation, the Trump administration launched Operation Epic Fury, introducing the United States military into direct hostilities with Iran as part of what President Trump and multiple administration officials have characterized as "war." With at least 50,000 troops participating in the largest U.S. naval and air mobilization since the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the Trump administration has provided no clear strategy, timeline, objectives, cost assessment, or credible legal basis for these military operations.

After just over a week of fighting, seven U.S. servicemembers have been killed and at least 140 have been injured. According to reports, more than 1,700 people have died as the war spread from Iran to Israel, the Gulf states, Lebanon, and beyond—affecting at least 15 different countries to date. U.S. embassies, consulates, and military installations throughout the region are under daily attack. Thousands of U.S. citizens were left stranded when the war began, because the administration failed to plan for evacuating Americans in advance. And while President Trump drags the U.S. into another potential forever war in the Middle East, the Trump administration is cutting benefits to our nation's veterans, trivializing military rules of engagement, and firing counterterrorism experts who focus on preventing threats from Iran and its proxies here at home, undermining U.S. safety, strength, and prosperity.

Now let us be clear: the Iranian regime, which is the largest state sponsor of terrorism, is the most dangerous and destabilizing force in the region and should never be allowed to obtain a nuclear weapon. We also stand with the people of Iran, who deserve a government that guarantees basic human rights, democracy, economic opportunities, and a future free from oppression. However, the challenges posed by Iran's regime cannot be resolved through military means alone—and none of these facts suspend our Constitution or confer upon any president the authority to unilaterally wage war.

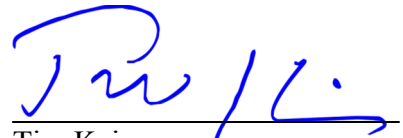
As Members of the United States Senate, we have a duty to deliberate on the sacred matters of war and peace. The Trump administration also has a duty to publicly make its case before Congress and the American people, and if the administration wants to continue fighting this war, they must seek legal authorization from Congress. We therefore urge you to ensure the Senate committees of jurisdiction hold hearings with Secretaries Hegseth and Rubio immediately.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



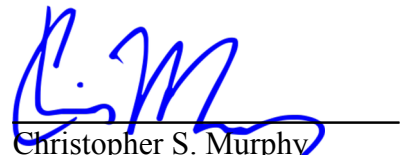
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United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
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