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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-0918

October 30, 2024

Lloyd J. Austin III  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Austin,

We write with grave concern over deficiencies in the Defense Department's protocols and procedures allowing active-duty service members to vote ahead of the November 5th general election. Specifically, we are concerned the Pentagon has not done enough to make our service members aware of their options for voting nor has it committed enough resources so the men and women wearing our nation's uniform can exercise their right to vote.

Our nation's brave men and women in uniform brought to our attention that there has been inadequate education at the administrative level on how to register to vote, request an absentee ballot, and fill in a federal write-in absentee ballot if their state-issued ballot does not arrive in time. Other service members also stated that when a request for a federal write-in absentee ballot was made, they were told the base's stockpile of such ballots was depleted and had not been replenished.

We have heard similar complaints from other service members. The Pentagon must do everything in its power, so our nation's elite warriors have every opportunity to make their voices heard this election cycle. This is especially important since voters will be deciding our next commander-in-chief — the person who will be making life-and-death decisions for our troops.

As such, we urge you to mobilize all the necessary resources over the next seven days to give every American citizen wearing our nation's uniform the opportunity to vote if they so desire, pursuant to all federal and state regulations governing elections. We also ask that you answer the following questions:

1. What training or guidance has the Pentagon provided to facilitate the ability of activity duty service members to vote?
2. If such training or guidance has occurred, was it given nationwide or delegated to the individual service branches to facilitate?
3. How does the Department's Federal Voting Assistance Office conduct oversight with regard to responsibilities delegated to each service under DOD Instruction 1000.04?
4. What training does the Department provide to each unit's Voting Assistance Officer (VAO)? Pursuant to such training, what outreach efforts are VAOs required to complete within their units?
5. Has the Pentagon given every single military unit a directive that they do everything in their power to facilitate the ability for service members to vote?
6. Is there a sufficient stockpile of federal write-in absentee ballots for service members nationwide to vote if their state-issued absentee ballot does not arrive in time?
7. Have you made available time for every service member to review a sample ballot electronically, so they know their voting options ahead of the election or if they have to fill in a federal write-in absentee ballot?

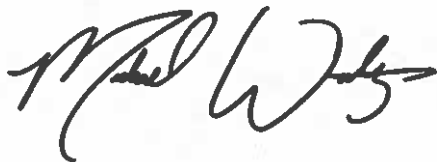
Thank you for taking the time to review our questions.



Brian Mast  
Member of Congress



Bill Huizenga  
Member of Congress



Mike Waltz  
Member of Congress