

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 8, 2026

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2469 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
425 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2264 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Wicker and Rogers, and Ranking Members Reed and Smith:

We write in support of a critical, bipartisan provision adopted in both the House and Senate Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 *National Defense Authorization Act* (NDAA) to require the Department of Defense (DoD) to establish a single, department-wide hate symbol policy applicable to all servicemembers and DoD civilian employees. As you continue negotiations for the FY 2027 NDAA, we strongly urge you to retain this important bipartisan provision in the final bill.

Existing DoD hate symbol policies vary across our military service branches, creating inconsistent standards and potential enforcement gaps when it comes to addressing their display. This lack of uniformity makes it harder to prevent, identify, and address symbols that promote hate, and can even allow displays to go unaddressed depending on branch-specific rules. These symbols include swastikas and nooses, potent symbols of hate that have long been used to intimidate, harass, and discriminate against Jewish and Black communities. Just last year, the US Coast Guard (USCG) was planning on implementing a policy to reclassify symbols such as the swastika and noose as “potentially divisive” symbols rather than as hate symbols.¹ Such a change would have allowed these horrific symbols of hate to potentially be displayed in official Coast Guard workplaces and during the performance of official Coast Guard duties. It was only after repeated bipartisan pushback from Members of Congress on USCG and Department of Homeland Security leadership that this change in policy was ultimately reversed.²

¹ Tara Copp and Michelle Boorstein, *U.S. Coast Guard Will No Longer Classify Swastikas, Nooses as Hate Symbols*, Washington Post (November 20, 2025) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/11/20/coast-guard-swastika-noose/>

² Konstantin Toropin, Lisa Mascaro, and Susan Haigh *Coast Guard reverses course on policy to call swastikas and nooses ‘potentially divisive’*, Associated Press (November 21, 2025) <https://apnews.com/article/coast-guard-swastikas-nooses-hate-symbols-policy-43b1ff282da18694184ff20ff8ce7c4a>

The swastika is not potentially divisive. It is one of the most universally recognized symbols of hatred in human history. It represents antisemitism, racial supremacy, violent extremism, and the systematic persecution and murder of millions. The noose is not potentially divisive. It is a symbol of racial terror. It carries the legacy of lynching, intimidation, and violence used for generations to threaten Black Americans and deny them their fundamental rights and humanity. The USCG incident underscores why a consistent, uniform hate symbol policy is needed across DoD and across all the U.S. Armed Forces.

When symbols associated with violent extremism, racial supremacy, or targeted intimidation appear in military workplaces, they undermine unit cohesion, erode morale, and threaten the good order and discipline upon which military readiness depends. Our bipartisan provision, incorporated in both the Senate and House FY27 NDAA's, provides a practical path forward. By requiring the DoD to establish clear, context-based standards, update guidance for commanders and investigators, and provide training to the force, the provision will ensure that there are consistent definitions, enforcement, and accountability across components.

We ask our servicemembers to defend the Constitution and represent the very best of our country. They deserve a workplace free from symbols of intimidation, extremist affiliation, and racial or ethnic hostility. This provision helps ensure that context-based, uniform standards are clear and consistently enforced across the DoD.

We therefore strongly urge you to keep this provision in the final text of the FY27 NDAA.

Sincerely,



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



James Lankford
United States Senator



Wesley Bell
United States Representative