

MIKE ROGERS, ALABAMA, CHAIRMAN  
JOE WILSON, SOUTH CAROLINA  
MICHAEL R. TURNER, OHIO  
ROBERT J. WITTMAN, VIRGINIA  
AUSTIN SCOTT, GEORGIA  
SAM GRAVES, MISSOURI  
ELISE M. STEFANIK, NEW YORK  
SCOTT DESJARLAIN, TENNESSEE  
TRENT KELLY, MISSISSIPPI  
DON BACON, NEBRASKA  
JACK BERGMAN, MICHIGAN  
RONNY JACKSON, TEXAS  
PAT FALLON, TEXAS  
CARLOS A. GIMENEZ, FLORIDA  
NANCY MACE, SOUTH CAROLINA  
BRAD FINSTAD, MINNESOTA  
MORGAN LUTTRELL, TEXAS  
JENNIFER A. KIGGANS, VIRGINIA  
JAMES C. MOYLAN, GUAM  
CORY MILLS, FLORIDA  
RICHARD MCCORMICK, GEORGIA  
LANCE GOODEN, TEXAS  
CLAY HIGGINS, LOUISIANA  
DERRICK VAN ORDEN, WISCONSIN  
JOHN MCGUIRE, VIRGINIA  
PAT HARRIGAN, NORTH CAROLINA  
MARK MESSMER, INDIANA  
DEREK SCHMIDT, KANSAS  
JEFF CRANK, COLORADO  
ABRAHAM HAMADEH, ARIZONA

\_\_\_\_\_  
GEOFF GOSSELIN, STAFF DIRECTOR

## COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6035

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

ADAM SMITH, WASHINGTON,  
RANKING MEMBER  
JOE COURTNEY, CONNECTICUT  
JOHN GARAMENDI, CALIFORNIA  
DONALD NORCROSS, NEW JERSEY  
SETH MOULTON, MASSACHUSETTS  
SALUD O. CARBAJAL, CALIFORNIA  
RO KHANNA, CALIFORNIA  
BILL KEATING, MASSACHUSETTS  
CHRISSEY HOULAHAN, PENNSYLVANIA  
JASON CROW, COLORADO  
MIKIE SHERRILL, NEW JERSEY  
JARED F. GOLDEN, MAINE  
SARA JACOBS, CALIFORNIA  
MARILYN STRICKLAND, WASHINGTON  
PATRICK RYAN, NEW YORK  
GABE VASQUEZ, NEW MEXICO  
CHRISTOPHER R. DELUZIO, PENNSYLVANIA  
JILL N. TOKUDA, HAWAII  
DONALD G. DAVIS, NORTH CAROLINA  
GIL CISNEROS, CALIFORNIA  
ERIC SORENSEN, ILLINOIS  
MAGGIE GOODLANDER, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
SARAH ELFRETH, MARYLAND  
GEORGE WHITESIDES, CALIFORNIA  
DEREK TRAN, CALIFORNIA  
EUGENE VINDDMAN, VIRGINIA  
WESLEY BELL, MISSOURI

\_\_\_\_\_  
BRIAN GARRETT, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

April 4, 2025

The Honorable John Phelan  
Secretary of the Navy  
1000 Navy Pentagon, Room 4D652  
Washington, DC 20350

Dear Secretary Phelan,

We write to you with grave concern regarding recent reports that Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth ordered the United States Naval Academy to remove books from circulation in Nimitz Library that advance “gender ideology” or “discriminatory equity ideology” pursuant to the January 29, 2025 Executive Order “*Ending Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schooling*.” It was also reported that 900 books were identified for potential removal<sup>1</sup> and that 400 books are currently being purged from the Nimitz Library.<sup>2</sup>

If true, this is a blatant attack on the First Amendment and a clear effort to suppress academic freedom and rigor at the United States Naval Academy. Moreover, it displays an alarming return to McCarthy-era censorship.

We note that the collection philosophy of the Nimitz Library explicitly affirms that “[i]ntellectual and academic freedom have been cornerstones of academic thought and rigor for over a century in higher education in the United States. The Nimitz Library is dedicated to these core principles of building knowledge in its acquisition, promotion, and retention of scholarly materials. Thus, the librarians actively acquire resources from content creators that encompass the full spectrum of voices and perspectives available.”<sup>3</sup>

This philosophy is in keeping with the recent testimony of Lieutenant General Tony Bauernfeind, Superintendent of the United States Air Force Academy, before the Senate Armed Services’ Subcommittee on Personnel, who stated that the military service academies endeavor to teach the future leaders of our diverse armed forces “*how to think, and not what to think.*” To develop the next generation of Naval officers, the United States Naval Academy must remain committed to intellectual freedom by ensuring the Brigade of Midshipmen can access, explore, and express ideas freely without restriction or interference. Thus, we demand that you immediately cease the review and removal of books and materials at the United States Naval Academy.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/28/us/politics/naval-academy-diversity-affirmative-action.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/military-academies-dei-hegseth-trump-ba9731f24b4eb4bd9c02b568209f97af>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.usna.edu/Library/about/policypage.php#panel2accordion1CollectionPhilosophy>

Additionally, in the interests of congressional oversight and transparency, we request answers to the following questions:

1. Was the United States Naval Academy directed to initiate a review and removal of books within the Nimitz Library? If so, by whom?
2. What books have been identified for potential removal and how were they identified?
3. Have books already been removed from circulation in Nimitz Library? If so, what books have been or will be removed?

We appreciate your attention to these questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Adam Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A".

Adam Smith  
Ranking Member  
House Armed Services Committee

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chrissy Houlahan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C".

Chrissy Houlahan  
Ranking Member  
Military Personnel Subcommittee