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March 19, 2025

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

Dear Secretary Hegseth:

Although your tenure as our Secretary of Defense has been brief, you and President Trump have already demonstrated exemplary leadership and dedication to our nation by swiftly prioritizing the strength of our armed forces. That is why I encourage the Department of Defense to investigate the Biden-Harris Administration mismanaging funds intended for service members' nutrition.

Our service members make immense sacrifices to protect our nation, and it is our duty to ensure they receive the support and respect they deserve. However, an investigative article by Military.com, published on February 14, 2025, discovered the United States Army spending money that is deducted from Soldiers' paychecks for food on unrelated programs. The article stated that in 2024, under the Biden-Harris Administration, over \$151 million collected from junior enlisted Soldiers for food costs was diverted to other uses within the Army's budget. Most alarmingly, at Fort Stewart, Georgia, \$17 million was collected from soldiers, yet only \$2.1 million was allocated for food, leaving \$14.9 million unaccounted.

A subsequent report by the New York Post on February 15, 2025, underscores the Army's troubling lack of transparency regarding how these funds were used. No detailed breakdown has been provided, and soldiers have reported reduced access to quality meals, forcing many to pay out-of-pocket despite the automatic deductions from their paychecks. This is unacceptable.

These practices raise serious concerns about the management and oversight of funds deducted from soldiers' Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS). The BAS, approximately \$460 per month, is intended to cover food costs, yet a significant portion of these funds appear to have been diverted elsewhere. The failure to properly allocate these resources undermines trust in military leadership and directly impacts the well-being and morale of service members.

Unfortunately, this is just another example of how the Biden-Harris Administration has failed our troops. From mishandling the withdrawal from Afghanistan to the poor treatment of food services on military bases, President Biden's leadership consistently neglected the needs of our service members. Redirecting funds meant for food is not just a financial issue—it is a betrayal of the trust that soldiers place in their government.

Considering these findings, I request a comprehensive explanation addressing the following points:

1. **Accounting for Diverted Funds:** A detailed account of how the \$151 million, particularly the \$14.9 million from Fort Stewart, was reallocated and the justification for diverting these funds from their intended purpose.
2. **Impact Assessment:** An evaluation of how the diversion of these funds has affected the quality and availability of food services for soldiers across all affected bases.
3. **Preventative Measures:** The steps being implemented to ensure that funds designated for soldiers' sustenance are used appropriately and transparently in the future.

Under your leadership, I trust the Department of Defense will thoroughly investigate this issue. Our service members dedicate their lives to protecting our freedoms, and they should never have to question whether they will have access to a proper meal. Ensuring the proper allocation of resources is paramount to maintaining the trust and welfare of our military personnel. I look forward to your prompt and thorough response to these concerns.

Sincerely,



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress