



HEGSETH ELIMINATES \$580 MILLION ON WASTEFUL 'WOKE' SPENDING - THE CENTER SQUARE

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Photo: Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth eliminates \$580 million of "wasteful spending" on contracts, grants and programs that aren't mission critical to redirect funds to support US military operations. (U.S. Department of Defense)

In an ongoing effort to identify and cut wasteful spending at the U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said the latest round of cuts total more than \$580 million.

In the last few weeks, working with the U.S. Department of Government Efficiency, the DOD has eliminated more than \$800 million in programs, contracts and grants "that do not match the priorities of this president or this department," Hegseth said. "In other words, they are not a good use of taxpayer dollars. Ultimately, that's who funds us and we owe you transparency and making sure we're using it well."

Hegseth signed a memo on Thursday identifying the latest programs he terminated, representing \$580 million "in wasteful spending that is inconsistent" with the DOD's priorities and nearly \$170 million in estimated savings that can be reallocated to mission-critical priorities.

Top on the list was the Defense Civilian Human Resources Management System (DCHRMS) software development program and associated active contracts at the Defense Human Resources Activity (DHRA).

The program is six years behind schedule and more than \$280 million (780%) over budget, with another additional two years expected of development and testing before reaching initial operating capability.

The program was intended to streamline a significant portion of the DOD's legacy Human Resources information technology, which still needs to be achieved but not through a program that hasn't delivered after six years, he said. Any more investment in the DCHRMS project "would be throwing more good taxpayer money after bad," he said. "We're not doing that anymore."

He also directed department heads to develop a new plan within 60 days.

Next on the chopping block was more than \$360 million of grants department-wide to fund Diversity, Equity and Inclusion programs, as well as so-called climate change, social justice and other initiatives that "are not aligned with DOD priorities."

Examples include \$6 million for decarbonizing emissions from Navy ships; \$5.2 million to diversify the Navy by engaging Black,

Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) students and scholars, \$9 million for equitable AI and machine learning models.

"I need lethal machine learning models, not equitable machine learning models," Hegseth said.

He also cut \$30 million in contracts with external consulting firms for analysis products that are not mission critical. This includes contracts with Gartner and Mackenzie and discontinuing purchasing unused licenses.

These cuts bring the total to \$800 million "in wasteful spending cancelled over the first few weeks as DoD partners with DOGE to make sure that our war fighters have what they need," Hegseth said. "They're working hard. We're working hard with them. We appreciate the work that they're doing, and we have a lot more coming."

Last month, Hegseth announced that DOGE was working with the DOD "to find fraud, waste and abuse in the largest discretionary budget in the federal government."

"DOGE was given access to systems - with proper safeguards and classifications - to first find redundancies and identify previous priorities not core to the department's current mission and then get rid of them," Hegseth said. "With DOGE, we are focusing as much as we can on headquarters and fat and top-line stuff that allows us to reinvest elsewhere."

He directed the Pentagon to first pull 8%, or roughly \$50 billion, from nonlethal programs in the current budget and refocus the money on "America First" priorities for national defense.

"That's not a cut; it's refocusing and reinvesting existing funds into building the force that protects you, the American people," he said.

Hegseth also implemented a hiring freeze to implement better hiring practices in order to find the most "hard charging" employees that will contribute to the DOD's core warfighting mission.