



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-1403

December 11, 2024

LTG Steven W. Gilland  
Superintendent  
United States Military Academy  
West Point, NY 10996

Dear General Gilland,

I write regarding the recent, apparent attempt by the U.S. Military Academy Office of Public Affairs (OPA) to interfere in the nomination of the next Secretary of Defense, Pete Hegseth.

As you know, *ProPublica* reporter Jesse Eisinger had been preparing to publish a story falsely claiming that nominee for Secretary of Defense, Pete Hegseth, was lying when he said that he was admitted into West Point but decided not to attend. To preempt the publication of a blatantly false story, Hegseth published his West Point acceptance letter, proving the veracity of his claim and leading *ProPublica* to kill the story. Eisinger defended his reporting, claiming that West Point OPA told him “twice on the record” that Hegseth had not even applied to West Point.

It is outrageous that West Point officials would so grossly interfere in a political process and make false claims regarding a presidential nominee. It is also deeply unwise, given that Hegseth will soon have oversight over West Point. Even in the unlikely scenario of OPA mistakenly making false claims not once but twice, it is an unforgivable act of incompetence that OPA did not make absolutely sure their information was accurate before sharing it with a reporter.

I urge you to immediately provide to the House and Senate Armed Services Committees all communication and documentation regarding how West Point OPA falsely accused Hegseth of lying about his application. I further call upon you to investigate the bureaucrat at West Point OPA who made these false allegations, to remove them from their post, and to consider for removal from Academy employment all individuals who wish to politicize their institution rather than support the education and readiness of the next generation of Army leaders.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Banks". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Jim Banks  
Member of Congress