



By: TA | AP Brief

US military has no plans to send troops to the polls in November



The highest-ranking officer in the U.S. military says there are no plans to send troops to polling places during November's midterm congressional elections, addressing concerns among **Democrats** that the Trump administration could use the military to interfere with the vote.

Gen. Dan Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, made the statement in a letter to Michigan Democratic Sen. **Elissa Slotkin**, who recently asked Caine and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth to confirm they won't send troops to the polls.

"The Joint Force has no plans to send Federal military personnel or Federalized members of the National Guard to polling places during the 2026 elections," Caine said in the letter to Slotkin, which was obtained Monday by The Associated Press. "Likewise, the Joint Force has no plans to use such personnel to seize ballots, voting machines, or other election-related material."

Caine, who advises Hegseth and President Donald Trump on military matters, also wrote: "I have neither received nor anticipate receiving any unlawful order concerning the role of the Joint Force in the upcoming November 2026 midterm elections."

Anxiety among **Democrats** that the Trump administration could try to meddle in the midterm elections has grown, particularly after the president deployed federal agents in Democratic-led states over the objections of local leaders.

Slotkin told the AP earlier in August that Trump has been laying the groundwork to claim the elections were stolen.

She noted that Trump contemplated **using the military** to seize voting machines after his loss in 2020 and has deployed the National Guard to cities against the wishes of Democratic leaders.

He also deployed active duty **Marines** to Los Angeles during his immigration crackdown in 2025.

National Guard

Federal law **prohibits** the deployment of armed federal forces to election locations unless "necessary to repel armed enemies of the United States."

If any element of the military were to get involved, it would likely be the **National Guard** under state control.

White House chief of staff **Susie Wiles** denied in a Vanity Fair interview last year that Trump would use the military to suppress voting in the midterms.

I've never been ordered to do anything illegal, and I won't - Pete Hegseth

Sonja Thrasher, Slotkin's press secretary, said Hegseth has not replied to the letter asking him to confirm troops won't be deployed to the polls in November. Slotkin had asked for a response by last Thursday.

The Pentagon did not immediately respond to an email from the AP asking for the status of Hegseth's response to Slotkin. The Pentagon previously said it would respond directly to the senator.

Slotkin asked Hegseth during an April congressional hearing if he would follow orders to seize ballots.

Hegseth called the question a "gotcha hypothetical," but said, "I've never been ordered to do anything illegal, and I won't."

In 2020, Gen. **Mark Milley**, then-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, responded to a similar letter from Slotkin, then a congresswoman.

"I believe deeply in the principle of an apolitical U.S. military," Milley wrote. "In the event of a dispute over some aspect of the elections, by law U.S. courts and the U.S. Congress are required to resolve any disputes, not the U.S. military."