

## Vets for Freedom

"I have known Pete Hegseth for 18 years. I helped to recruit and hire Pete to be the executive director of Vets for Freedom, a group I co-founded in 2006. The recent onslaught of attacks on his character are the last gasps of desperate and dying contrarians, hell bent on maintaining the pernicious status quo that is slowly choking out the warrior ethos in our military today.

Pete Hegseth is a force of nature, who led Vets For Freedom like he led on the battlefield. Pete routinely and voluntarily went into hostile media environments to take on the ideological opposition at a time when none of the "neocons" had the intestinal fortitude to debate the war that they sent us to fight. Vets For Freedom spent its resources and funds defending the pro-soldier policies of the late Senator John McCain at a time when McCain's own campaign completely abandoned both the fight in the battleground states and their candidate. There was not one irresponsible fiscal decision made by Vets For Freedom, and had there been, you would have heard about it years ago. Many of the individuals who quelled the efforts of John McCain in 2008 now serve as the leaders of the immoral yet lucrative fight against Trump's pro-America movement. Vets For Freedom fought harder and with more resiliency defending the ethos of the warrior than any veteran group I have been associated with since.

Unlike his detractors, Pete Hegseth doesn't run around leaking conjecture and smearing the character of individuals under the cowardice of anonymity. Pete is fearless, unflappable, and confronts conflicts head on. He is a leader to his core.

When Pete Hegseth is confirmed as the next Secretary of Defense of the United States of America, this country will finally know the privilege of having a true ambassador, able to speak on behalf of this generation and its two decade *Global War On Terror*. Pete is bold and willing to make decisions that will keep America safe, which is the primary reason he continues to be relentlessly targeted. Hegseth puts his statements on the record clearly and shares his opinions transparently. His book *War on Warriors* definitively and aggressively details his vision for a healthy future of the Department of Defense.

There are few men born with the fire and grit of Pete Hegseth. Washington doesn't build men like Pete. Combat builds men like Pete. He will deliver the antidote that the Department of Defense has been begging for-- screaming for, in every formation, throughout all branches of our military. This cacophony of our service members have been purposely ignored since 2021. And it is because of Pete Hegseth's determination to deliver a change that those in the establishment who wish to maintain the status quo will continue to pile on.

Pete Hegseth is built for this fight. He is ready for this mission. Our nation and the greatest military the world has ever known will be better under his leadership and for years to follow, and the desperate neocon grifters know this.

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**David Bellavia**  
**Vets For Freedom co-founder**  
**Medal of Honor, Iraq**

After my return from Iraqi and the Al bar province in 2006, I joined Vets for Freedom under the leadership of Pete Hegseth. As I spent time with Pete and the other veterans who felt strongly about the sacrifices we had made in Iraq and Afghanistan, I begin to realize what a clean and upstanding individual Pete is. In 2008 it was my honor to go to Iraq with Pete and now Medal of Honor recipient David Bellavia to gain a true perspective of the surge that our brave Warriors had pushed to eradicate extremism. I was amazed at Pete's commitment to talking to every Marine, soldier and sailor he could come in contact with. That's when I begin to realize what a true leader Pete had become.

Over the years when the burdens of war crept up, Pete has always been the guy that I could call no matter how bad it was. No matter how busy he was, Pete would answer and give sound advice. That is the leadership that President Trump sees in Pete and not some wishy-washy no name hack piece like what was put out today. That is the most unsubstantiated piece of journalistic garbage ever created. The people have spoken and they chosen Trump mainly because people are tired of being lied to and Trump chose Pete because it's time to get our military strong and out of the swamp. President-elect Trump could not pick a better man of character and bravery that will stand beside the soldiers, not the bureaucrats DC keeps throwing into the swamp.

My time in service as the state captain of New Mexico for Vets For Freedom, not only was VFF a very well-oiled machine financially and operationally, but the level of professionalism exceeded all of my expectations, which is why I risked my life to go back to Iraq with Vets For Freedom under Pete's leadership.

Respectfully,

**Sgt. Shawn Bryan retired USMC**

## **Concerned Veterans for America**

Pete Hegseth's policy expertise on defense and veteran's healthcare was pivotal to my success as the Executive Director of Concerned Veterans for America. He laid a strong foundation that postured CVA for long-term success.

Pete Hegseth led the task force effort that created the blueprint for the most substantive VA reforms in a generation. Without his leadership at that critical time, this would not have happened.

I retained his top advisors (Dan Caldwell, Nate Anderson, Darin Selnick) who were essential in advancing Trump's agenda of VA Accountability and the MISSION Act.

After Pete departed the organization and I took over he continued to be an invaluable asset to both me as a leader and the organization.

**Mark Lucas**  
**Executive Director, CVA**

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As the Gold Star mother of fallen US Navy SEAL, Aaron Vaughn (SEAL Team VI) and as a veterans' advocate who traveled with Pete for three plus years on the Concerned Veterans for America Defend Freedom Tour, I believe I have a unique perspective on this appointment.

Regarding Pete's competence: Most importantly, he's been there. He fought (boots-on-the-ground) in America's longest war – the twenty-year war on terror. He's seen--and felt--the mistakes made by previous leaders and has agonized over needless losses, caused by Rules of Engagement sent to those on the ground from those circling linen-draped tablecloths back in the states. He won't make the same mistakes. His heart will be focused on his fighters, not his promotions or politics. Don't be surprised when enlistment skyrockets after confirming him in this role. Mothers will once again trust America's Armed Forces to have their child's safety at the forefront of decisions.

Regarding Pete's character: I have had an up-close and personal relationship with him for over a decade and can state without reservation that he is a trustworthy, dedicated, brilliant man who has demonstrated a level of commitment to America's warfighters and veterans unmatched to any other I've known. Pete is a natural-born leader, with remarkable temperament and an ability to listen and unite in all circumstances. Please do not allow the swirling disinformation to persuade you into believing he's not the right man for this job. He was born for this job.

With respect and gratitude,

**Karen Vaughn**

**Gold Star Mother  
Co-Founder of Operation 300**

I have known and worked with Pete Hegseth since 2012. There has been no better leader, policy champion or fighter for the military and veterans than Pete. He was instrumental in 2014 and 2017 in ensuring that veterans had healthcare choice and that poor performing VA employees were held accountable. I have the utmost confidence that Pete will be an outstanding Department of Defense (DOD) Secretary and will lead DOD to be the best it can be.

**Darin Selnick, Air Force veteran. Former Veterans Affairs adviser on President Donald Trump's Domestic Policy Council and Senior Advisor to the VA Secretary.**

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I served as Louisiana State Director and Temp Regional Director(3 Months) for Concerned Veterans for America (CVA) from 2014 to 2016.

I took this position based on my research of Mr Pete Hegseth and the CVA Mission of improvement of the Veterans Personal Choice card. I come from a family of Veterans and served 29 years in US Army and LA National Guard retiring as O5/LTC.

CVA's mission of assisting to achieve a better VA Personal Choice Card was a rewarding mission. As Vets my Dad and I had some problems with our VA service, so this mission rang home. The work CVA did to help accomplish a better improved VA Personal Choice card did not seem like work. Reaching this goal was a privilege to have been part of the team.

During these two years I travelled with CVA to DC, FL,NY,NC and events in my home State of LA. Pete Hegseth conducted himself as a Officer and a Gentleman. He was professional and humble to his staff in CVA and to people who attended our events. I felt he displayed good judgement and management of his staff and a deep desire to help fellow Veterans. I respect Pete and would work for him again at anytime.

I have served as a supervisor in many capacities for over 30 years through Military assignments and Civilian companies and feel I am a good judge of character. Pete Hegseth is one of those Individuals I rank high on my list of people who push to get great things accomplished to help people in need and push to make great things happen.

What the New Yorker published could not be further from the truth! I never saw Pete Hegseth flirt or do anything inappropriate with his female staffers or any other female.

**Tina Kingston**  
**Louisiana State Director, CVA**

My name is Holly Talley. I served as the Louisiana Local Director for Concerned Veterans for American from October 2014- December 2016. I had the privilege of serving alongside Pete Hegseth, during his time as CEO of CVA and have called him a friend since that time. I have always known Pete to be a man of honesty, integrity and character.

During my time with CVA, I frequently traveled to Defend Freedom Tour stops, policy maker town halls and various other events. These included the deployments to Louisiana in November 2014 and the Defend Freedom Tours stops on Ohio in May 2015. I personally never witnessed any unprofessional or inappropriate behavior by Pete during these events.

Pete has always been one of the most dedicated, hardworking and passionate individuals that I know when it comes to advocating and fighting for our veterans. Throughout my professional friendship with Pete Hegseth, both at CVA and after, he has consistently demonstrated unwavering honesty, integrity and character. He is a leader of character that will continue to fight and advocate for what is right.

Sincerely,

**Holly K. Talley**  
**Louisiana Local Director, 2014-2016**  
**Concerned Veteran for American**

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"Serving as Digital Media Director at Concerned Veterans for America during Pete Hegseth's leadership was a truly meaningful chapter in my career. Pete brought incredible energy, focus, and a clear vision to the organization, and it showed in everything the team accomplished together.

What made Pete stand out wasn't just his passion for advocating for veterans—it was his ability to tackle the bigger picture. Under his leadership, CVA didn't just fight for better care for veterans; we also addressed critical issues in defense and foreign policy. Pete had a way of cutting through the noise to highlight what really mattered, and he inspired everyone around him to think bigger and aim higher.

The work we did together made a real difference. Whether it was pushing for reforms to improve how veterans are treated or advocating for smarter, more responsible national security policies, Pete led the charge with integrity and courage. I'm proud to have been part of a team that didn't just talk about change but made it happen, and a lot of that is thanks to Pete's leadership. He has an incredible ability to rally people around a mission and make them believe in the difference they can make. I'll always value the time I spent working with him and the impact we had together."

**Casin Spero**

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