

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 23, 2025

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Hegseth,

We write today regarding funding for Beyond the Yellow Ribbon (BYR) programs for Fiscal Year (FY)2025. Although the final, full-year continuing resolution (CR) did not include a specific line-item for BYR, sufficient funds were included in the Operations and Maintenance (O&M), Defense-Wide budget to ensure these programs can continue through the fiscal year.

As you know, the Senate's FY 2025 Defense Appropriations Act—which passed out of the Appropriations Committee on a unanimous, bipartisan basis—provided BYR with \$22 million for FY 2025, a mere 0.04% of the O&M Defense-Wide budget passed in the final FY 2025 CR. Clearly, this budget has the flexibility needed to continue the operation of these programs through the remainder of the current fiscal year.

The decision by the Department of Defense not to fund BYR leaves 24 states across the country without the resources needed to serve those men and women who put their lives on the line to defend our country. As a nation, when someone makes a promise to defend our country, we make a promise in return that we will be there to support them when they come home. BYR programs do just that, helping tens of thousands of members of the National Guard and Reserve components and their families before, during, and after deployments. Working closely with local social service organizations, as well as federal and state agencies, these outreach programs have proven effective at connecting Guard members, Reservists, and their families with services that address a broad range of needs.

Programs funded by BYR promote access to physical, behavioral, and oral health care; marriage, family, and financial counseling; treatment for substance use disorder; suicide prevention; educational and housing assistance; employment services; and many other important services. These outreach programs are especially critical in rural areas and in states without active component military installations, where it is often more difficult to access services and connect with others who understand the deployment experience. For nearly two decades, these programs have helped thousands of service members, veterans, and their families effectively manage the challenges associated with deployments and military service. Let's be clear: these programs save lives.

Given the success of these programs across the country, the value they bring to participants and taxpayers, and the clear Senate intent, we urge you to use your authority as Secretary to provide the funding necessary to continue operations of Beyond the Yellow Ribbon programs for the remainder of the 2025 Fiscal Year and work with us to fully fund these programs in the FY 2026 budget.

Sincerely,



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Peter Welch
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator