



Written by [Paul Dragu](#) on January 25, 2025

## Hegseth Squeezes Through Confirmation Vote Despite Republican Opposition

Whether qualified or otherwise, Pete Hegseth is the next U.S. defense secretary. The Senate narrowly confirmed his nomination late Friday, thanks to Vice President J.D. Vance's tie-breaking vote but no thanks to three Republicans with an impressively atrocious voting record.

The final vote was 51 to 50. That's the smallest margin for a defense secretary's confirmation since the position was created in 1947, according to Senate records. All the Democrats voted against Hegseth's confirmation, despite efforts to bring some to his side.



AP Images  
Pete Hegseth

Hegseth is a former Army National Guard officer who served tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan and earned two Bronze Stars as a result. He's a Princeton University graduate, and a political commentator for Fox News. His promise to the American people is that he's going to kill wokeness in the military and make America's defense once again the most lethal in the world. Nevertheless, his aim is not war, but peace through strength.

The former officer has criticized women in combat roles. He has taken digs at NATO member nations for being "self-righteous and impotent nations asking us to honor outdated and one-sided defense arrangements they no longer live up to."

### Republican Opposition

The three Republicans who voted against Hegseth's confirmation were Senators Susan Collins of Maine, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, and Mitch McConnell of Kentucky. McConnell, who refuses to retire despite his [obvious health decline](#), said Hegseth has not demonstrated a sufficient understanding of national security challenges to handle the job of defense secretary. Murkowski cited concerns about Hegseth's lack of relevant experience on Pentagon policy, as well as accusations of sexual assault and excessive drinking, which Hegseth has denied. Collins, for her part, also based her nay vote on Hegseth's lack of experience.

All three have among the worst voting records of any Republicans. As *TNA's* Freedom Index shows, McConnell, in the Senate four decades, has cast votes that align with the U.S. Constitution only [56 percent of the time](#). Murkowski, a senator since 2002, has outdone McConnell, with a [45 percent freedom score](#). She's voted to dole out American money to other countries and reauthorize permission for America's spy agencies to spy on Americans without warrants. And she's never met a spending bill she didn't like. Collins has managed to fool the people of Maine into thinking she's a conservative since the Bill Clinton years, despite only adhering to the U.S. Constitution [in 38 percent of her votes](#).

Interestingly, while both women cited a lack of qualification as their reason to oppose to Hegseth, they



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didn't have a problem confirming a [mentally ill man who dresses as a woman](#) as Joe Biden's assistant secretary of health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

## **Hegseth's Battle**

Hegseth's confirmation came on the heels of a long, hard-won battle against a coordinated media smear campaign. Democrats tried to bury his nomination by circulating an affidavit from an estranged former sister-in-law who accused Hegseth of abusing his ex-wife, Samantha Deering. Deering, however, denied there was any abuse during their marriage, and said the allegations were not accurate.

At one point, it looked as if his nomination was doomed, with additional Republicans expressing doubts. But the combat veteran put together his own campaign. He spent weeks on Capitol Hill meeting with Republican senators and discussing their concerns.

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