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ALWAYS ASKING. ALWAYS PHILLY.



Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth testifies Tuesday at a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington.
Jacquelyn Martin / AP

Hegseth estimates Iran war has cost \$37.5B so far, asks Senate for more

Senators of both parties grill the defense secretary about his leadership of the Pentagon as well as its urgent budget request.

By Lisa Mascaro
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth faced questions and protests Tuesday over the U.S. war with Iran, which he estimated has cost \$37.5 billion so far, as Republicans prepare a \$95 billion GOP budget package to fund the military, along with other White House priorities.

Hegseth provided the new estimate, up from earlier assessments, during a fiery hearing at the Senate Appropriations Committee. Several times, protesters interrupted Hegseth's opening remarks, which came days after the Pentagon announced that three more American service members have died in the conflict, bringing the death toll to 17, and that more than 100 have been injured since early July.

Hegseth said the supplemental war funding is an "urgent, necessary" injection of money, and with President Donald Trump's proposed \$1.5 trillion defense budget a generational investment in the military.

"Without these funds, we face critical shortfalls," Hegseth testified.

But Sen. Patty Murray, the top

Democrat on the panel, warned of "another forever war."

"This war is now spiraling out of control again," Murray said in her opening remarks.

Trump "has told us over 40 times now that a deal is near, and the war will be over soon," she said. "But now, he's asking for \$70 billion more — and for us to just trust him it'll all work out fine."

Gen. Dan Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins were also testifying before the panel. The proposed budget package includes \$60 billion and \$12 billion for other national security needs, along with \$10 billion for farm aid and \$10 billion for voting law changes.

Before the hearing, the White House issued a statement urging support of the

budget resolution, "without modification—immediately."

War funding makes up the bulk of the GOP's new budget proposal, one last priority package the Republicans hope to launch before lawmakers recess to campaign for the midterm elections that will determine control of Congress. The package aims to help farmers struggling under Trump's tariffs and to pay for voter law changes that are likely to include new ID requirements, none of it paid for with offsets.

Most Americans continue to disapprove of how Trump is handling Iran, according to an AP-NORC poll. Gas prices have spiked as Iran works to control oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz, U.S. munitions are running low from

→ SEE HEGSETH ON A4

N.J. says glitch let ineligible voters cast ballots

About 6,600 noncitizens were wrongly registered, and fewer than 400 voted, Gov. Mikie Sherrill said. The White House seized on the disclosure.

By Michelle Baruchman
and Aliya Schneider
Staff Writers

Roughly 6,600 people who were not citizens were improperly registered to vote over a yearlong span ahead of the 2024 election because of a software error in New Jersey's motor vehicle system, New Jersey Gov. Mikie Sherrill disclosed Tuesday.

The revelation came just days after President Donald Trump's administration targeted New Jersey as one of four states that the Department of Homeland Security claimed had noncitizens on its voter rolls, along with neighboring Pennsylvania. The White House said the announcement from New Jersey underscored the need for Trump's proposed national overhaul of elections.

Among the noncitizens, who were wrongly registered between June 2023 and June 2024, fewer than 400 cast a ballot, Sherrill said.

The voters were scattered across the state and registered as Democrats, Republicans, and unaffiliated voters, though the office did not provide percentage breakdowns.

Sherrill, a Democrat who took office in January, pointed a finger at her predecessor, noting that the wrongful registrations took place under former Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy. She said that she "immediately ordered" her chief counsel to investigate the issue and that the individuals erroneously added to the voter rolls be removed "before the next election," which will be the November midterms that will

→ SEE VOTERS ON A10

Trump officials seek to bypass public review of major projects

A proposed rule change alarms outside groups who say it could allow the government to proceed with development with few local guardrails.

By Dan Diamond
and Jake Spring
Washington Post

The Trump administration is seeking to loosen federal rules intended to protect historic sites, alarming outside groups who say the changes would allow government agencies and developers to pursue major projects — such as President Donald Trump's planned triumphal arch — without soliciting public input.

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, a low-profile federal agency that oversees preservation reviews and advises the president and Congress, on Friday proposed significant revisions to a federally required process that governs changes to landmarks such as the

National Mall, sites that are significant to Indigenous tribes, and other properties eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The process currently applies to any construction projects that are on federal land or receive federal funding, as well as private projects that require any type of federal approval.

Under the current rules, federal agencies must undertake a multi-step Section 106 review assessing the potential effects of construction projects and soliciting public input, among other requirements. The revised rules would let federal agencies build their own projects or grant approval for construction by private developers without public input, according to a proposed rule and an accompanying document obtained by the Washington Post.

Trump officials have previously said the 60-year-old rules can hamper development projects and needed renovations and had called for the regulations to be overhauled. But the timing of the administration's announcement and the breadth of the proposed changes caught many historic preservation

→ SEE PROJECTS ON A6

2 prosecutors say Krasner told them to 'protect the office' in murder case

In a legal filing, the assistant district attorneys pointed to what they saw as conflicts in appellate litigation.

By Chris Palmer
Staff Writer

Two Philadelphia prosecutors have accused District Attorney Larry Krasner of instructing them to litigate a controversial appellate case in a manner that would "protect the office" — a highly unusual assertion that effectively accuses the city's top law enforcement official of telling his staff to act in a way they now say was "incompatible with their ethical obligations and the interests of the Commonwealth."

In a court document filed late Monday, Assistant District Attorneys Katherine Ernst and Steven J. Wildberger wrote that Krasner's directive came after they had been



Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner. Tom Gralish / Staff Photographer

seeking to persuade him to allow the state attorney general's office to take over the appeal of Dennis Johnson, who is seeking to have his murder conviction overturned.

That case — which the district attorney's office has been handling — has become a flash point in an ongoing debate about whether Krasner's office has behaved improperly in its efforts to overturn flawed convictions.

And it received renewed attention last week, when a former prosecutor who was once assigned to Johnson's appeal, and who had

recommended that the conviction be overturned, said she had done so only at the direction of her boss. She also said she was encouraged to lie about aspects of the case in court to try to minimize scrutiny on the way the office handled it.

According to Ernst and Wildberger, they experienced similar pressures from Krasner.

As the office was weighing how to handle aspects of Johnson's appeal this spring, they wrote, they tried to persuade Krasner to refer the case to the state attorney general's office because of issues that had arisen internally over its handling.

One example, they said, was that a supervisor who was initially involved with the appeal — and who they believed had made mistakes while overseeing it — was still offering legal advice about it from a different role in the office, which Ernst and Wildberger viewed as self-interested and "inappropriate."

But the district attorney's office kept the case. And during the

→ SEE KRASNER ON A10