

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 29, 2025

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Hegseth:

We write to express our concerns regarding decisions by the Department of Defense (DoD) to carry out extreme reductions in force (RIF) and impose hiring restrictions across the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS), including the DFAS operation in Rome, New York. With the reduction of nearly 100 full-time staff, DoD's second round of the damaging deferred resignation program (DRP) and targeting of probationary employees could result in the dismissal of hundreds of full-time employees. If carried out, these reductions would irreparably degrade DoD's ability to provide mission-critical financial services and logistical support to every level of the US Armed Forces, all the way down to warfighters and their families, and ultimately jeopardize the readiness of the Joint Force. As such, we urge you to rescind any restrictions on new hires, reverse plans to reduce probationary personnel, and to cease all efforts to coerce DFAS Rome employees into resigning.

Established in 1995, DFAS Rome is the only working capital fund (WCF) agency to provide finance and accounting services exclusively to the Department of Defense, and for 30 years has been the backbone of managing all financial elements of DoD operations, from payroll and facilities sustainment to foreign military sales (FMS) and forward deployment. However, due to the workforce reductions already incurred, several operation cells at DFAS Rome are trending towards mission failure. For example, the DFAS Rome Call Center—which is the primary resource for soldiers to seek information about their benefits enrollment—has suffered a 20% cut to its staff, making it exceedingly difficult for servicemembers, retirees, civilian personnel, and vendors to resolve payroll issues, troubleshoot logistical matters, and receive their health and/or retirement benefits.

The reductions in force have also impacted DFAS Rome's travel section, which manages all support functions related to military travel. The hundreds of additional personnel losses anticipated as part of the upcoming DRP round will significantly delay—if not entirely disrupt—the processing of everyday travel-related claims for servicemembers and dependents, such as reimbursement under the Joint Travel Regulation (JTR) or requests for travel vouchers. Combined with the downstream impacts of the hiring freeze and dismissal of probationary employees, the decimation of DFAS Rome's travel section will force servicemembers to cover Permanent Change of Station (PCS) costs and may even force them to pay for aspects of their own deployment, with little to no recourse for seeking immediate reimbursement. These impacts will undoubtedly impose additional burdens and stress factors on our warfighters and their families that are otherwise completely avoidable, and will ultimately degrade readiness, recruitment, and retention among our Armed Forces.

Furthermore, continued reductions from this second round of the DRP could yield more damage to a DFAS Rome executive leadership team already weakened by the initial RIF and removal of probationary employees. DFAS Rome's leadership represents a treasure trove of institutional knowledge and specialized skills across a civilian workforce of just over 1,000 people, all of whom are responsible for the daily operation and management of the largest national defense budget in the world. However, in order to function at optimal levels, these 1,000 employees across DFAS Rome's section areas need a stable leadership structure to provide executive direction, establish performance review metrics, and to serve as a conduit between the tactical-level workforce and DFAS's strategic leadership. If DFAS Rome's civilian workforce—including its executive leadership—are not protected, that skillset will continue to deteriorate and eventually lead to rampant operational failures across the DFAS organization.

Therefore, for all of these reasons and more, we strongly urge you to support our warfighters and their families by opposing any proposed workforce reductions at DFAS Rome.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



John Mannion
Member of Congress