

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 2, 2026

Secretary Kristi Noem
Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20528

Secretary Noem,

We are horrified that a [swastika was discovered](#) drawn on a bathroom wall at the United States Coast Guard Training Center in Cape May, New Jersey. We demand that you immediately restore explicit language classifying swastikas as prohibited hate incidents and condemn the use of this heinous symbol at a military facility. And we demand that you take significant steps to reverse the culture of hate that is developing in the Trump Administration.

A swastika is not merely graffiti. It is the most notorious symbol of antisemitism and white supremacy in modern history, a symbol carried by Nazis across Europe and raised above concentration camps where millions of Jews were murdered. It is a symbol that more than 400,000 American service members died to defeat. We cannot be casual about it.

Last fall, when the Trump Administration [rewrote the Coast Guard's](#) handbook to go easier on hate symbols, it changed behavior. Despite insisting that this would have no impact on the service, the swastika at Cape May is proof of the culture change.

In February 2023, the Coast Guard made important changes to the handbook that were unambiguous. It identified the swastika, the noose, supremacist symbols, Confederate flags, and antisemitic imagery as examples of symbols whose display “would constitute a potential hate incident.” The language from the original handbook left little room for doubt.

In November 2025, that clarity was replaced with vague, toothless language. The revised guidance removed the phrase “would constitute a potential hate incident” was removed. The term “hate incident” itself was struck from the policy. Words matter. When the Coast Guard's standard shifted, the culture inevitably followed. Public outcry against these changes forced the Coast Guard to rescind portions of the proposed guidance, but we are still horrified that the cultural impact has manifested as an act of antisemitism in our state.

In New Jersey alone, [ADL recorded](#) 719 antisemitic incidents in 2024, the second highest annual total ever recorded in our state. Twenty-four percent involved the display of a swastika. Nationally, antisemitic incidents reached an all-time high, and hate speech targeted at the Jewish community continues to be a rising threat.

The United States military has always been one of the few places in our national life where Americans of every race, faith, and background stand shoulder to shoulder, bound not by identity but by shared purpose. That unity is a source of our military's strength. If hate is minimized, if its symbols are softened, we risk eroding that unity from within.

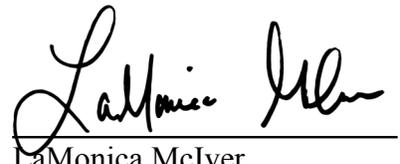
We urge you to immediately condemn the use of the swastika at this military facility and restore explicit language classifying swastikas and other hate symbols as prohibited hate incidents. Every recruit who arrives at Cape May, and every service member serving in our armed forces, deserves to know with certainty that when it comes to hate, our military does not equivocate.

There is no gray area here.

Sincerely,



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



LaMonica McIver
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Nellie Pou
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.
Member of Congress



Robert J. Menendez
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress