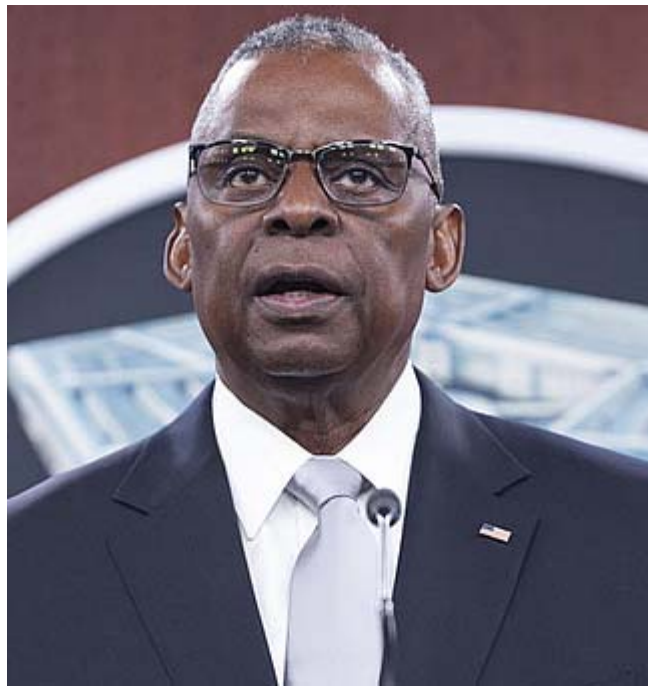


Defense chief on the defensive: Lawmakers to confront Austin on secret hospital stay

by LOLITA C. BALDOR | AP



Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin will face Congress publicly for the first time Thursday to explain his failure to quickly notify the president and other senior leaders about his hospitalization last month for complications from prostate cancer surgery. He is expected to hear some sharp questions and criticism from members of the House Armed Services Committee for keeping his hospital stay secret for days, including from President Joe Biden. A number of Republicans have blasted him for the lack of transparency and used the incident to slam the Biden administration for not keeping Congress informed.

Deputy Secretary Kathleen Hicks during that time and when he had the initial surgery in December. He did not, however, tell her why and he did not inform the White House.

Department officials did a classified briefing with senators on Tuesday that got mixed reviews.

Sen. Deb Fischer, R-Neb., criticized the decision to make the briefing classified, saying the public deserves to know details about the communications breakdown. And she said the Defense Department must, at a minimum, “consider how to inform Congress about future gaps in command — as required by current law.”

The lapse has raised questions about whether there were gaps in the command and control of the nation's armed forces, including its nuclear arsenal. The Pentagon has insisted there was no break in control as Austin transferred authorities to the deputy secretary.

The chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., called the internal review a “starting point” and said the briefing was intended to ensure that communications problems don't happen again.

Austin's remarks to the committee will likely mirror a mea culpa that he delivered in a press briefing early this month. He has taken full responsibility for the communications failures and apologized, and the department has ordered a number of changes and improvement in the procedures.

The Pentagon officials have acknowledged that public affairs and defense aides were told on Jan. 2 that Austin had been hospitalized but did not make it public and did not tell the military service leaders or the National Security Council until Jan. 4. Only then did Biden find out. It took four more days before the reason for his hospitalization was disclosed.

A newly released internal review — which was done by Austin's subordinates — largely absolved anyone of wrongdoing for the secrecy surrounding his hospitalization. The review concluded there was “no indication of ill intent or an attempt to obfuscate,” and it blamed communications failures on privacy restrictions and staff hesitancy to seek or communicate timely information about Austin's health and condition.

The secretary spent several days in intensive care and transferred decision-making authorities to

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NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of James Fletcher, Deceased, were issued on February 21, 2024, in Cause No. C-1-PB-23-001680, pending in the Probate Court No: 1, Travis County, Texas, to: Clifton Eugene Fletcher, Sr.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

Clifton Eugene Fletcher, Sr.
Independent Executor, Estate of James Fletcher
18804 Great Falls Drive
Manor, Texas 78653
DATED the 1st day of March, 2024.

Marilynn Poole Webb
Attorney for Angeline Doris Young Fletcher

NOTICE OF COMPETITIVE SEALED PROPOSALS

for
PACE and Old Transportation Building Fire System Renovations
In
Pflugerville ISD

Pflugerville ISD will accept Competitive Sealed Proposals from qualified firms until **2:00 p.m., March 28, 2024**, in the lobby of the Pfisd Administration Building. Address all submittals to:

Janie Ornelas, Director of Procurement & Auxiliary Services
Pflugerville Independent School District
1401 West Pecan
Pflugerville, Texas 78660

The anticipated budget for this project is estimated at NTE \$200,000. The scope and schedule for this project as currently defined is described in the Proposal Document.

Proposal documents may be obtained by contacting the Pflugerville ISD Purchasing Department by email at Guadalupe.Ornelas@pfisd.net. Documents can also be downloaded from the district website at: <https://www.pfisd.net/site/Default.aspx?PageID=259>.

Pflugerville I.S.D. reserves the right to waive any formalities and to reject any or all Proposals.

Project Schedule of Events

- Request for Proposals Released March 4, 2024
- Pre-proposal Conference March 19, 2024 2:00 pm
- Vendor Questions Due March 21, 2024 12:00 pm
- Due Date for Proposals March 28, 2024; 2:00 p.m.
- Board Approval Expected April 18, 2024
- Notify Firm April 19, 2024
- Contract Begins May 1, 2024
- Substantial Completion Date July 2025

NOTICE OF COMPETITIVE SEALED PROPOSALS

for
CHS Fire System Renovations
In
Pflugerville ISD

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Pflugerville, Texas 78660

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PUBLIC NOTICES



Integral Care is currently soliciting proposals for Security Services. The Request for Proposals maybe accessed at integralcare.org/business-opportunities or by emailing brody.ballard@integralcare.org. The deadline to submit a proposal under the RFP is 5:00 P.M. CDTon April 2, 2024. Historically Underutilized Businesses, including Minority-Owned Businesses and Women-Owned Businesses, are encouraged to apply.



Integral Care is currently soliciting proposals for a Learning Management System. The Request for Proposals may be accessed at integralcare.org/business-opportunities or by emailing brody.ballard@integralcare.org beginning February 16, 2024. The deadline to submit a proposal under the RFP is 5:00 P.M. CST on March 29, 2024. Historically Underutilized Businesses, including Minority-Owned Businesses and Women-Owned Businesses, are encouraged to apply.

BID INVITE

DeNucci Constructors, LLC invites all City of Austin MBE/WBE Certified Businesses to bid on this project:

**Country Club Creek Trail –
Elmont Dr. to E. Oltorf St.**

Solicitation No.: IFB6100 CLMC1019 C.I.P No.: 10796.012

Contact: bids@denucciconstructors.com

O: 512-335-0600 F: 512-342-0600

Project Details – Call, Email, or View Online

<https://www.austintexas.gov/financeonline/finance>

Travis County Healthcare District d/b/a Central Health
1111 E. Cesar Chavez Street
Austin, TX 78702

RFP 2402-001 Pharmacy Equipment and Services
Due Date: 3/20/2024 by 2:00 PM CT

Central Health is requesting proposals for automated pharmacy dispensing equipment and other lines of pharmacy equipment and supporting services. Interested Manufacturers and Distributors must be responsive to all RFP requirements to be considered for a contract.

Ordering Instructions: Package can be downloaded from: <https://prod.bidsync.com/central-health>

OR <http://www.centralhealth.net/finance/purchasing>
OR <http://www.txsmartbuy.com/sp>

AUSTIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE (ACC) DISTRICT is requesting sealed proposals from interested or qualified firms for the purposes of selecting a respondent to provide **District-Wide Photo Documentation Services for the following solicitation.**

• **Competitive Sealed Proposal (CSP) No. 905-24-189-00 S-KR-CSP**

All sealed proposals must be submitted to the Procure to Pay (P2P) Department by no later than **on Wednesday, March 20, 2024 at 12:00 PM Central Standard Time (CST)**. See solicitation for details.

Solicitation documents are available on the ACC P2P's website at:

- <https://offices.austinctx.edu/procurement/advertised-solicitations/> or at
- <https://us.workdayspend.com/rfps/public/607798>

If you are not able to view this solicitation, **please send an email to the Buyer/Sole Point of Contact for the solicitation as soon as possible.**

SOLE POINT OF CONTACT:

- **Kimberly Royal, Buyer**
- **Email: Kimberly.royal@austinctx.edu**
- **Telephone Number: (512) 223-1043**

Only electronically transmitted responses will be accepted by the date and time indicated above, unless otherwise stated in the solicitation documents.

ACC will host an optional solicitation conference on **March 5, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. via Zoom Virtual Meeting**. See solicitation documents for details.

Notice: ACC Business Offices and campus locations will be closed for the College's **Spring Break from March 11, 2024 through March 15, 2024.**



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For information on the City of Austin's Minority/Women-Owned Procurement Program please contact the Small & Minority Business Resources at 512-974-7600 or visit www.austintexas.gov/smbbr.

