

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

March 21, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Noem:

We write concerning the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) taxpayer-funded advertising campaign titled the "Stronger Borders, Stronger America Campaign." Contrary to DHS's stated intent of the campaign, reports indicate that, at the express direction of President Donald Trump, DHS is paying significant sums to produce and distribute materials with the intent of lauding the President's draconian immigration policies.¹ In doing so, DHS appears to have evaded the competitive bidding process that ensures taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly, instead awarding this vanity project as a multiple-award indefinite delivery and indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contract—valued up to \$200 million over two years—to enrich Republican campaign consultants.² We ask that you address this apparent blatant misuse of American tax dollars and provide information and documents pertaining to such misuse.

According to your statements at the 2025 Conservative Political Action Conference, President Trump specifically requested that you launch a "marketing campaign" on his immigration policies and stated, "I want you to thank me for closing the border" in the first ad, to which you responded, "Yes sir, I will thank you for closing the border."³ DHS's press release claims that the target audience is current or potential undocumented immigrants, but reporting indicates that, as of March 10, DHS planned to spend \$3.3 million to air the ad through the end of March, including across popular programs like "The Today Show," "Good Morning America," "The Five," and "Fox & Friends," with a specific \$30,000 carveout to air the ads in

¹ Department of Homeland Security, *Press Release: DHS Announces Nationwide and International Ad Campaign Warning Illegal Aliens to Self-Deport and Stay Out* (Feb. 17, 2025) (online at www.dhs.gov/news/2025/02/17/dhs-announces-ad-campaign-warning-illegal-aliens-self-deport-and-stay-out); Andrew Perez and Asawin Suebsaeng, *Kristi Noem Says \$200 Million DHS Ad Campaign Thanking Trump Was His Idea*, ROLLING STONE (Feb. 21, 2025), <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/trump-kristi-noem-200-million-dhs-ad-campaign-thanks-president-1235276324/>, (President Trump reportedly instructed "I want you to thank me" with the advertising campaign).

² Federal Procurement Data System, https://www.fpds.gov/ezsearch/search.do?q=people+who+think+LLC+UEI_NAME%3A%22PEOPLE+WHO+THINK%2C+L.L.C.%22+PIID%3A%2270RDA225D00000003%22&s=FPDS.GOV&templateName=1.5.3&indexName=awardfull (accessed Mar. 12, 2025).

³ C-SPAN, *Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem Speaks at CPAC Dinner* (Feb. 21, 2025) (online at www.c-span.org/program/public-affairs-event/homeland-security-secretary-kristi-noem-speaks-at-cpac-dinner/655959).

West Palm Beach from February 25 to March 5, when the President was reportedly there.⁴ Such expenditures suggest that an unstated but primary purpose of the ad is to function as an extension of President Trump's campaign and to pander to the President, raising concerns of a potential misuse of taxpayer dollars.

These concerns are underscored by the lack of a competitive bidding process for the award of contracts associated with this campaign and the specific vendors who benefitted from it. On February 13, 2025, just three days after DHS first solicited bids from interested organizations to develop the campaign, DHS awarded one contract to People Who Think, LLC⁵—the same organization that previously created ads for President Trump's 2016 presidential campaign.⁶ Jay Connaughton, co-founder of People Who Think, was a media advisor to the Trump campaign and previously worked with and has close ties to Corey Lewandowski, a former Trump campaign manager and special government employee of your Department.⁷ On February 19, 2025, DHS also issued a \$16 million task order for the same campaign to Safe America Media, LLC.⁸ Notably, at the time of the award, there was no entity with the name Safe America Media in the official government system that stores such information.⁹ According to media reports, Safe America Media was incorporated with an address to a property owned by a Republican consultant on February 6, 2025, only 11 days before the ads were released.¹⁰

⁴ Department of Homeland Security, *Press Release: DHS Announces Nationwide and International Ad Campaign Warning Illegal Aliens to Self-Deport and Stay Out* (Feb. 17, 2025) (online at www.dhs.gov/news/2025/02/17/dhs-announces-ad-campaign-warning-illegal-aliens-self-deport-and-stay-out); *DHS Ramps Up Ad Campaign*, Politico (Mar. 10, 2025) (online at www.politico.com/newsletters/weekly-score/2025/03/10/dhs-ramps-up-ad-campaign-00220141); The Bulwark, *Morning Shots: We Live in the Dumbest Times* (Mar. 7, 2025) (online at <https://www.thebulwark.com/p/trump-cabinet-musk-cuts-dumbest-timeline-al-green-medicaid-speech>).

⁵ Federal Procurement Data System, https://www.fpds.gov/ezsearch/search.do?q=people+who+think+LLC+UEI_NAME%3A%22PEOPLE+WHO+THINK%2C+L.L.C.%22+PIID%3A%2270RDA225D00000003%22&s=FPDS.GOV&templateName=1.5.3&indexName=awardfull (accessed Mar. 12, 2025).

⁶ Shelby Talcott, *Homeland Security Budgets 200m for New Border Ad Campaign*, SEMAFOR (Feb 18, 2025), <https://www.semafor.com/article/02/18/2025/homeland-security-budgets-200m-for-new-border-ad-campaign>.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Federal Procurement Data System, www.fpds.gov/ezsearch/search.do?q=Safe+America++UEI_NAME%3A%22SAFE+AMERICA+MEDIA+LLC%22+ULTIMATE_UEI_NAME%3A%22SAFE+AMERICA+MEDIA+LLC%22+UEI_NAME%3A%22SAFE+AMERICA+MEDIA+LLC%22+PIID%3A%2270RDA225FR00000009%22&s=FPDS.GOV&templateName=1.5.3&indexName=awardfull (accessed Mar. 12, 2025); USA Spending, https://www.usaspending.gov/award/CONT_AWD_70RDA225FR00000009_7001_70RDA225D00000004_7001 (accessed Mar. 12, 2025).

⁹ See <https://sam.gov/about/this-site>. A search for "Safe America Media" and "R64SJRYFDKM7" returned no results.

¹⁰ Adriana Gomez Licon, *How the White House Hired Republican Political Firms to Launch an Anti-Migrant Ad Campaign*, ASSOCIATED PRESS (Mar. 11, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/dhs-immigration-award-republican-ad-campaign-e7939619195791493e828dfd20604d65>.

Given the significant costs of the advertising campaign, the questionable choices made in deploying the ads, and the awardees' relationships with President Trump, the Trump campaign, and other federal officials, the Committees seek to ensure that the contracting process was fair, ethical, and compliant with all applicable federal regulations, and that the campaign complies with all relevant prohibitions on the use of taxpayer funds for improper purposes. To that end, we request that you provide the following information and responses no later than April 4, 2025:

1. All communications and documents regarding any market research and competitive analysis conducted by the Department before issuing the solicitation for service for the Stronger Borders, Stronger America Campaign;
2. All communications and documentation regarding the selection of Safe America Media, LLC, and People Who Think, LLC, as the vendors for the Stronger Borders, Stronger America Campaign, including, but not limited to:
 - a. All drafts and final copies of the solicitation for service;
 - b. All proposals and bids submitted to the Department in response to the solicitation for service;
 - c. All drafts and final copies of the contracts awarded to vendors; and
 - d. All emails, messages, memoranda, and other communications sent, received, or created in relation to the campaign;
3. All communications between the Department and any other agency or department regarding the Stronger Borders, Stronger America Campaign, to include the Executive Office of the President;
4. All communications between the Department and Safe America Media, LLC, People Who Think, LLC, their representatives, and any affiliated entity; and
5. All communications and documents detailing the monetary amounts the Department has obligated and expended to date, or plans to obligate or expend, to carry out the Stronger Borders, Stronger America Campaign, including a list of media markets in which the ad has aired or will be aired, the expenditures associated with each media market, and the rationale for such selections and expenditures.

The Committee on Homeland Security is the principal committee of the House of Representatives with jurisdiction over the Department of Homeland Security. The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate "any matter" at "any time" under House Rule X. The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform also has legislative jurisdiction over the overall economy, efficiency, and management of government operations and activities, including federal procurement. Responses to this request for information will inform necessary legislative reforms on the topics covered in this letter.

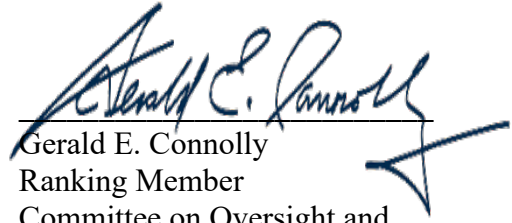
If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Committee on Homeland Security Democratic staff at (202) 226-2616 and Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Democratic staff at (202) 225-5051.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Bennie G. Thompson
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security



Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and
Government Reform

cc: The Honorable Mark E. Green, MD, Chairman, House Committee on Homeland Security

The Honorable James Comer, Chairman, House Committee on Oversight and
Government Reform