



One Hundred Nineteenth Congress  
Committee on Homeland Security  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

March 28, 2025

The Honorable Mark E. Green  
Chairman  
Committee on Homeland Security  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Green:

We write to request, once again, that the Committee hold a hearing to receive testimony from Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem. The Trump administration has initiated drastic changes to the offices and operations of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS or the Department) since January 20 without consulting Congress. As Members of the Department's primary authorizing committee, we have an obligation to hold the administration accountable for decisions that affect the efficacy of its programs. Failure to demand transparency and accountability of DHS leadership is a dereliction of duty.

Ranking Member Thompson sent you a letter on February 11, 2025, requesting that you invite Secretary Noem to testify before the Committee by March 14. He renewed the request again at the February 26 markup where Republicans rejected two resolutions of inquiry (ROI). The ROIs would have directed the Secretary to provide to the Committee documents related to the ongoing hiring freeze and deferred resignation gimmick, the grant funding freeze, and the so-called Department of Government Efficiency's (DOGE) access to Department information systems and data. You responded: "We will talk to the Secretary and figure out a time. But I know she has to come for the annual World Wide Threats briefing." As you are likely aware, the Committee traditionally holds its annual World Wide Threats activity in the fall. That is far too long to wait for Congressional oversight.

When Ranking Member Thompson wrote to you on February 11, he raised concerns that Secretary Noem was not providing sufficient oversight of DOGE's activities and information access at the Department. He also raised concerns about the Trump administration's plans to dismantle the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Secretary's hostility to the Federal workforce, and the ongoing hiring and Federal grant freeze. None of these issues have gone away. Remarkably, the administration's activity at DHS has only generated more unchecked chaos over the intervening weeks. Moreover, the administration has been slow,

unwilling, or unable to provide answers to the inquiries Members have made about changes to the Department's workforce, programs, and offices. As hurricane season approaches, cyber threat actors grow bolder and more sophisticated, and U.S. citizens and permanent residents are being detained and even deported by immigration officials, we owe it to our constituents to ensure the Department is carrying out its mission to defend the homeland while following the law.

The Trump administration approach to national security has only grown more irresponsible since February 11. Just this week, we learned that top Trump administration officials engaged in a disturbingly cavalier conversation about imminent military operations via Signal, a commercial open-source messaging application. By all accounts, none of the participants in the Signal chat appeared surprised that a conversation relating to such grave subject matter was transpiring in that forum. We can only presume that means Signal is commonly used by administration officials to discuss sensitive, and potentially classified, information. We must have the opportunity to engage the Secretary on this important issue.

The impacts of the administration's recklessness are compounded by its continued attacks on the Department. On March 7, 2025, Secretary Noem moved to end collective bargaining and union rights for Transportation Security Administration workers—a blatantly political attack against employee unions that have been instrumental in stemming the agency's catastrophic attrition rates. The courts will ultimately decide the legality of this counterproductive union busting, but in the meantime, it places transportation security at risk in the middle of the spring break travel season.

On March 21, 2025, DHS eliminated three of its internal watchdogs, including the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, the Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman, and the Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman.<sup>1</sup> The 300 employees staffing those offices promoted liberty, fairness, and equality in DHS programs and activities, and addressed complaints about the immigration system. Dismantling these offices was nothing other than a blatant attempt to remove any guardrails as Trump subverts the rule of law. Additionally, the Trump administration terminated nearly 20 percent of the DHS workforce focused on preventing terrorism and targeted violence. Dismantling DHS's terrorism prevention office when DHS and the Federal Bureau of Investigation have been consistently warning about heightened terrorism threats is irrational.<sup>2</sup>

During a televised cabinet meeting on March 24, 2025, Secretary Noem made the shocking declaration, "We're going to eliminate FEMA."<sup>3</sup> She and other administration officials reportedly met the next day to make plans to dismantle the agency.<sup>4</sup> These outrageous remarks and subsequent action are especially alarming given that the Nation is still recovering from the

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<sup>1</sup> Maria Sacchetti and Ellie Silverman, *DHS Shuts Down Internal Watchdog Agencies That Advocated For Immigrants*, WASH. POST (Mar. 21, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/2025/03/21/dhs-immigrant-advocates-watchdogs-oversight/>.

<sup>2</sup> Hannah Allam, *Killing Grants That Have Saved Lives: Trump's Cuts Signal End to Government Work on Terrorism Prevention*, PROPUBLICA (Mar. 20, 2025), <https://www.propublica.org/article/trump-doge-budget-cuts-terrorism-prevention>.

<sup>3</sup> Rachel Frazin, *Noem Says She Plans to 'Eliminate FEMA'*, THE HILL (Mar. 25, 2025), <https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/5213057-noem-plans-eliminate-fema/>.

2024 hurricane season and the 2025 hurricane season is just two months away. Now is not the time for the administration to weaken—much less dismantle—the only Federal entity charged with helping people before, during, and after disasters.

Secretary Noem’s announcement follows the Trump administration’s recent actions to weaken the Nation’s emergency management infrastructure, eroding its capacity and effectiveness. Amid understaffing at FEMA, the administration has fired experienced Agency personnel, with more staff expected to leave under Elon Musk’s deferred resignation scheme.<sup>5</sup> Under Secretary Noem, FEMA also continues to withhold grant funding for terrorism prevention and response, disaster relief, and cybersecurity from our communities. Grant programs that this Committee has championed for years in a bipartisan manner to keep our communities strong and support first responders are now under attack. For example, FEMA is withholding congressionally appropriated funding to churches, synagogues, and other houses of worship specifically designed for helping at-risk organizations prepare for and respond to acts of terrorism. This is unacceptable.

Regarding the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), we are aware the Agency eliminated at least 130 probationary employees before being forced by court order to reinstate them.<sup>6</sup> Terminated employees were responsible for programs related to urgent emerging threats and risks, including the Cyber Safety Review Board’s investigation into Salt Typhoon, software supply chain security, and programs aimed at securing operational technology. We are also aware that the administration has cancelled a number of CISA contracts, including those supporting “Red Team” operations,<sup>7</sup> and that it has cut \$10 million from the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center, which provides critical cybersecurity support to State and local governments.<sup>8</sup> The administration has dismantled or disbanded critical public-private collaboration structures, including the Critical Infrastructure Partnership Advisory Council<sup>9</sup> and the CISA Cybersecurity Advisory Committee,<sup>10</sup> that ensure the government and private sector

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<sup>4</sup> Gabe Cohen, ‘*We’re Not Preparing*’: *As Trump Officials Vow to Eliminate FEMA, the Agency is Already in Turmoil*, CNN (Mar. 26, 2025), <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/03/26/politics/fema-payments-staffing-stalled-turmoil/index.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Brianna Sacks, Hannah Natanson, and Ruby Mellen, *FEMA Is Losing Scores of Employees. What Does That Mean for Disaster Recovery?*, WASH. POST (Feb. 18, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2025/02/18/fema-layoffs-disaster-response/>.

<sup>6</sup> Nicole Sganga, *Fired CISA Probationary Employees to be Reinstated After U.S. Judge’s Order Last Week*, CBS NEWS (Mar. 17, 2025), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/fired-cisa-probationary-employees-reinstated/>. Some publications estimate that CISA has lost as many as 300 or 400 staffers, or about 10 percent of its workforce. Eric Geller, ‘*People Are Scared*’: *Inside CISA as It Reels From Trump’s Purge*, WIRED (Mar. 13, 2025), <https://www.wired.com/story/inside-cisa-under-trump/>.

<sup>7</sup> Matt Seldon, *CISA Clarifies Red Team Status Amid Contract Termination Reports*, HSTODAY (Mar. 24, 2025), <https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/cybersecurity/cisa-clarifies-red-team-status-amid-contract-termination-reports/>.

<sup>8</sup> Matt Nelson, *CISA Cuts \$10M in ISAC Funding & 100s of Employees*, DARK READING (Mar. 14, 2025), <https://www.darkreading.com/remote-workforce/cisa-cuts-isac-funding-employees>.

<sup>9</sup> Tim Starks, *Trade Groups Worry Information Sharing Will Worsen Without Critical Infrastructure Panel, CISA Law Renewal*, CYBERSCOOP (Mar. 11, 2025), <https://cyberscoop.com/cyber-information-sharing-critical-infrastructure-panel-cisa-law-renewal/>.

<sup>10</sup> Ravi Lakshamanan, *Trump Terminates DHS Advisory Committee Memberships, Disrupting Cybersecurity Review*, THE HACKER NEWS (Jan. 23, 2025), <https://thehackernews.com/2025/01/trump-terminates-dhs-advisory-committee.html>.

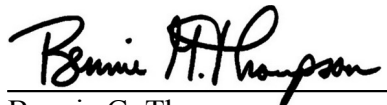
work together to defend critical infrastructure. All of this is to say nothing of the fact that the administration has reportedly eviscerated CISA's cybersecurity support to State and local election officials and has of yet refused to brief Congress on its assessment of CISA's election security mission.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, the Secretary needs to appear before the Committee to answer to the Department's shocking abuses of authority related to immigration enforcement. Although the Department claims to be going after the "the worst of the worst," under Secretary Noem, DHS has abandoned due process and sent people with no criminal records to facilities with deplorable conditions in Guantanamo Bay and El Salvador. Those deported under the Alien Enemies Act have been given no opportunity to appear before a judge, hear the claims against them, and assert a defense. In the chaos, the Department has swept up, detained, and even deported U.S. citizens, including a ten-year-old American child recovering from brain cancer. This is unconscionable.

The Trump administration's attempts to dismantle offices and components at DHS and its reckless disregard of the law and due process have little to do with efficiency and more to do with exacting vengeance on parts of the government the President holds a grudge against. If the administration wants Americans to believe its actions at DHS are anything short of a revenge tour, the Secretary should make the case to Congress.

We urge you to invite the Secretary to testify before the Committee without further delay. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Bennie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress  
Ranking Member, Committee  
on Homeland Security



Eric Swalwell  
Member of Congress



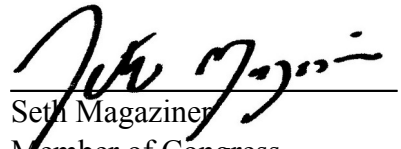
J. Luis Correa  
Member of Congress

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<sup>11</sup> See Adam Ambrogi, et al., *Election Security Is at Risk Amid Federal Government Actions*, NEWSWEEK (Mar. 24, 2025), <https://www.newsweek.com/election-security-risk-amid-federal-government-actions-opinion-2048879>.



Shri Thanedar  
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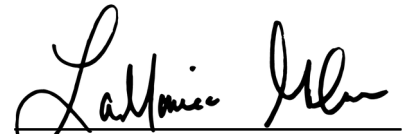
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