



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

October 24, 2025

Mr. Andy Jassy
President and Chief Executive Officer
Amazon
410 Terry Avenue N
Seattle, WA 98109

Dear Mr. Jassy:

I write to inquire about your company's decision to donate to the White House State Ballroom Project, which recently resulted in the demolition of the historic East Wing of the White House.

The President officially announced his intention to build a 90,000 square foot ballroom at the White House on July 31, 2025.¹ At the time, the President promised Americans: "It won't interfere with the current building. It'll be near it, but not touching it, and pays total respect to the existing building, which I'm the biggest fan of."² The President estimated the construction costs would total \$200 million and would be financed by private donors, including himself.³ At the press conference following the announcement, journalists repeatedly sought greater detail about the construction plans, including regarding the project's potential impact on the structure of the existing White House.⁴ The Press Secretary did not provide a clear response.

On October 20, 2025, despite the President's assurances to the public that the ballroom project would not interfere with the existing building, demolition crews began to destroy the East Wing of the White House. Although it initially appeared that the President planned to demolish only part

¹ Press Release, White House, The White House Announces White House Ballroom Construction to Begin (Jul. 31, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/2025/07/the-white-house-announces-white-house-ballroom-construction-to-begin/>.

² Gabe Gutierrez, et al., *White House's Entire East Wing to be Demolished 'Within Days,' Officials Say*, NBC (Oct. 22, 2025), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/trump-administration-demolishing-entire-east-wing-white-house-add-new-rcna239018>.

³ The White House, *supra* n. 1.

⁴ Politifact, *A new White House Ballroom "Won't Interfere with the Current Building,"* Poynter Institute (Oct. 22, 2025), <https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2025/oct/22/donald-trump/white-house-east-wing-demolition-flip-/>.

of the East Wing,⁵ days later the White House acknowledged plans to tear down the entire East Wing⁶ and shared that estimated construction costs had soared to \$300 million.⁷

Today, there is a gaping hole in the side of the White House, and no one in the White House has been honest with Americans about the construction plans or the costs.

As you are hopefully aware, the White House does not belong to President Trump, or any temporary occupant for that matter. It belongs to the American public. On their behalf, it is managed by the National Park Service.⁸ Traditionally, Presidents, recognizing they are temporary occupants of a building owned by the American public, submit to the process established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 when they plan major construction at the White House.⁹ That process involves submitting plans to the National Capital Planning Commission and provides a forum for historians, experts, and members of the public to have input into the fate of the White House.¹⁰ That obviously did not occur before demolition started.

The White House is not just the President's residence; it serves as living time capsule of our Nation's proud history. The East Wing's significance is of particular import, as it captures the all too often overlooked contributions of America's First Ladies. Since the 1930s, First Ladies have used the East Wing to conduct official business and host events, and the First Lady's official office has been housed there since the Carter administration.¹¹ As former First Lady Betty Ford observed: "If the West Wing is the mind of the nation, then the East Wing is the heart."¹²

Unfortunately, the heart was demolished on Monday, and the public had absolutely no say. Even Congress was not consulted, and there appears to be no oversight over the demolition and construction process. The ballroom construction plans have been roundly criticized by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Society of Architectural Historians, and the American Institute of Architects,¹³ and the demolition has been condemned by large swaths of the public. I understand, however, that your company chose to contribute to the White House State Ballroom Project,¹⁴ so perhaps you are more familiar with the plans that have been kept secret from most Americans.

⁵ Associated Press, *The White House Starts Demolishing Part of the East Wing to Build Trump's Ballroom*, NPR (Oct. 20, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/10/20/g-s1-94315/white-house-demolishing-east-wing-trump-ballroom>.

⁶ Matthew Cullen, *Trump Is Demolishing the Entire East Wing*, N.Y. TIMES (Oct. 22, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/22/briefing/trump-is-demolishing-the-entire-east-wing.html>.

⁷ Luke Broadwater, *Trump Is Wasting No Time in Tearing Down the East Wing*, N.Y. TIMES (Oct. 23, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/22/us/politics/east-wing-white-house-demolition-trump.html>.

⁸ The White House and President's Park, National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/whho/index.htm> (last accessed Oct. 23, 2025).

⁹ Madeline Halpert & Bernd Debusmann Jr., *The Decades-Old Exemption That Lets Trump Fast-Track White House Rebuild*, BBC (Oct. 23, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c397jvrrm4mo>.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ Ashley Ahn, *From the Roosevelts to the Kennedys: A Look Back at the White House East Wing*, N.Y. TIMES (Oct. 22, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/22/us/politics/east-wing-white-house.html>.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ Arden Farhi, *Historic Preservation Group Asks Trump Admin. to Pause White House East Wing Demolition Where Ballroom Will Be*, CBS NEWS (Oct. 23, 2025), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/historic-preservation-group-ballroom-white-house/>.

¹⁴ Brett Samuels, *White House Releases Donor List for Trump Ballroom Amid East Wing Demolition*, THE HILL (Oct. 23, 2025), <https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/5569197-major-companies-fund-whitehouse/>.

Given the urgency of the matter, I ask that you respond to the following questions no later than November 7, 2025:

- How did your company come to contribute to the White House State Ballroom Project? Did an individual or organization solicit the donation? If so, please provide a name and contact information for that individual or organization. Additionally, please provide as many details as possible about the solicitation.
- How much money did your company contribute to the White House State Ballroom Project?
- Was your company, or any individual associated with your company, offered any benefit or recognition in exchange for the donation to the White House State Ballroom Project?
- Please provide a list of existing contracts your company, or its subsidiaries, has with the Federal government. Additionally, please provide a list of any contracts for which your company, or its subsidiaries, is competing.
- Please provide a description of any regulatory action or adjudication in which your company, or its subsidiaries, has an interest currently pending before a Federal entity.
- Was your company advised by any government official or any other individual of any ethical issues or conflicts of interest that may arise as a result of donating to the White House State Ballroom Project?
- At any point prior to or subsequent to donating to the White House State Ballroom Project, did any individual associated or affiliated with your company have the opportunity to review the construction plans? If so, did the construction plans involve demolishing the East Wing?
- At any point prior to or subsequent to donating to the White House State Ballroom Project, did any individual acting on behalf of your company inquire whether major construction projects at the White House were governed by historic preservation laws and whether the project would comply with those laws?
- At any point prior to or subsequent to donating to the White House State Ballroom Project, did any individual acting on behalf of your company inquire whether there would be an opportunity for public input into the construction plans?

The White House is a treasured symbol of our democracy, and the President has begun to demolish part of it with funds your company contributed. You owe Americans an explanation.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bennie G. Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bennie" and last name "Thompson" clearly legible.

Bennie G. Thompson
Ranking Member