



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

February 24, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem  
Secretary  
Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Noem:

We write to you today with concern about the recent termination of hundreds of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) probationary employees, including those who had received strong performance reviews and military veterans.

On February 14, DHS moved to fire more than 400 employees across the Department.<sup>1</sup> According to public reports, DHS officials confirmed they fired more than 200 employees at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), over 130 at the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, and nearly 50 at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.<sup>2</sup> DHS spokesperson Tricia McLaughlin said the cuts will result in roughly \$50 million in savings and be “incalculably valuable.”<sup>3</sup> Six days later, the Department confirmed that it had also terminated 243 Transportation Security Administration (TSA) employees.<sup>4</sup> Per TSA’s spokesperson, the firings were necessary “to eliminate egregious waste and incompetence.”<sup>5</sup>

According to news reports, many employees received a dismissal notice stating, “Unfortunately, the Agency finds that you are not fit for continued employment because your ability, knowledge and skills do not fit the Agency’s current needs, and your performance has not been adequate to justify further employment at the Agency.”<sup>6</sup> Despite Department claims about low performance, many of the dismissed employees recently received strong performance reviews, and some had

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<sup>1</sup> Nicole Sganga & Camilo Montoya-Galvez, *Trump Administration Fires Over 400 DHS Employees as Mass Firings Continue*, CBS NEWS, Feb. 16, 2025, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-administration-fires-over-400-dhs-employees/#>.

<sup>2</sup> Id.

<sup>3</sup> Id.

<sup>4</sup> Joey Garrison, *More Than 200 TSA Employees Fired in Trump’s Push to Cut Federal Workforce*, USA TODAY, Feb. 20, 2025, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2025/02/20/tsa-trump-workers-fired/79307363007/>.

<sup>5</sup> Brianna Sacks, Hannah Natanson & 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> Sganga & Montoya-Galvez, *supra* note 1.

even received a rating of “achieved excellence” in the past year.<sup>7</sup> One such employee was a 13-year, disabled military veteran working as an information technology technician for FEMA for nearly 2 years.<sup>8</sup>

Without a fully staffed Department, the United States is less equipped to respond to natural disasters, harden our networks, and secure our transportation systems. Firing homeland security professionals en masse across DHS at a time when the Nation is facing acute threats from cyber criminals, deadly natural disasters, and aviation vulnerabilities undermines the Department’s mission. The supposed financial savings from these firings represent investments Congress has made to protect our national security, which the Administration has no constitutional authority to undo.

It is imperative that the Department be transparent and share its rationale for the mass firings beyond false claims of poor performance. To help the Committee better understand the underlying basis of the dismissals and the effects the dismissals may have on the Nation’s security, please provide the following:

1. Any guidance provided to DHS on how to terminate probationary employees;
2. Any guidance provided to DHS on which probationary employees to terminate;
3. Any information in DHS’s possession on why probationary employees were targeted for termination;
4. Information on any criteria or other factors used by DHS to identify which probationary employees should be terminated, including an employee’s acceptance of the Fork in the Road offer;
5. Any guidance on assessments supervisors or other management officials were directed to conduct in determining which probationary employees should be terminated;
6. Number of terminated employees broken out by component, job position, and grade;
7. Number of terminated employees who are veterans;
8. Copy of all dismissed employees’ most recent performance reviews; and
9. Number of terminated probationary employees DHS rehired.

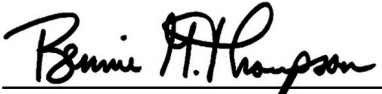
We look forward to receiving your responses by March 10, 2025.

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<sup>7</sup> Zachary Cohen, et al., ‘Indiscriminate Madness’: DOGE Claims Firings Target Low Performers and New Employees. *The Reality Is Far From It.*, CNN, Feb. 20, 2025, <https://www.cnn.com/2025/02/20/politics/doge-firing-low-performers-new-employees-reality/index.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Dan Ronan, *This FEMA civil servant and disabled military veteran voted for Trump. Now he’s out of a job.*, WTOP, Feb. 20, 2025, <https://wtop.com/virginia/2025/02/northern-virginia-family-surprised-by-fema-firings/>.

Sincerely,



BENNIE G. THOMPSON  
Ranking Member



Eric Swalwell  
Member of Congress



J. Luis Correa  
Member of Congress



Shri Thanedar  
Member of Congress



Seth Magaziner  
Member of Congress



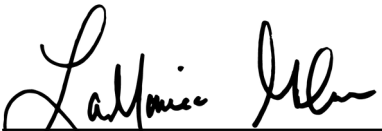
Dan Goldman  
Member of Congress



Delia C. Ramirez  
Member of Congress



Timothy M. Kennedy  
Member of Congress



LaMonica McIver  
Member of Congress



Julie Johnson  
Member of Congress



Pablo José Hernández  
Member of Congress



Nellie Pou  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sylvester Turner", written over a horizontal line.

Sylvester Turner  
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Mark E. Green, MD, Chairman