



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hearing Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)

The Ultimate Grift: How DHS Is Enriching the President and His Allies at Taxpayer Expense

March 25, 2026

Democratic Members of the Committee on Homeland Security are holding today's hearing to shed light on how former Secretary Kristi Noem and her closest advisors, including Corey Lewandowski, steered the award of Department of Homeland Security contracts to enrich themselves, President Trump, and his MAGA allies.

As Kristi and her close confidant Corey pack their bags and depart the Coast Guard Commandant's home once and for all, we are beginning to learn the full extent of the corruption and grifting they engaged in using DHS funds.

During her short tenure as Secretary, Kristi Noem authorized contracts totaling billions of dollars of taxpayer money for: jets, including luxury jets for herself, self-promotional ads featuring horses, recruiting campaigns using white nationalist images and slogans, vehicles wrapped in ICE's logo that sit idle, massive industrial warehouses to detain humans. All of those contracts went to companies with ties to Kristi Noem, Corey Lewandowski, or President Trump and Republican donors. As the White House confirmed last week, companies are also reporting that Corey Lewandowski tried to shake them down in return for DHS contracts. Just like Tom Homan and his bags of cash in a CAVA bag. None of this is normal.

Last year, DHS awarded \$2.5 billion in noncompetitive awards. These awards bypassed the typical competitive bid process that helps ensure contracts are awarded to qualified companies that provide the best value. By reviewing all contracts and grants worth more than 100 grand, Secretary Noem used her micromanaging skills to deny American communities security, terrorism prevention, and natural disaster grants, but fast-tracked contracts for her friends and friends of friends.

I do not have time to highlight all the corruption at DHS but here are some examples: Of course, there are the contracts for the well-known \$240 million ad campaign featuring Kristi on a horse that were awarded by the DHS Office of Public Affairs run by Tricia McLaughlin. We're supposed to believe it was just a coincidence that the Strategy Group, the company run by Tricia's husband, received a subcontract that included a \$60,000 dollar signing bonus.

Lesser known is an ICE recruiting campaign that benefited the same companies that received the ad campaign money. The recruiting ads were promoted on Truth Social, the President's social media platform. Pretending not to profit off Truth Social, the President placed it in a trust...controlled by his eldest son. Among the several new companies with no government experience profiting off DHS is a web of companies that all trace back to William Walters.

Mr. Walters, who donated money to a pro Noem PAC, created several companies as recently as last August which are leasing and buying planes for DHS being funded by the One Ugly Bill slush fund. Also paid for by that slush fund are the two dozen warehouses ICE is purchasing for about 100 million each to retrofit and house humans. The entire process lacks transparency. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about how the conflicts of interest and corruption we observed in DHS contracting this past year can be prevented.

Congress must also hold those who engaged in corruption, as well as waste, fraud, and abuse, accountable.

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