



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

October 2, 2020

The Honorable Chad Wolf  
Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Mr. Wolf:

The Committee is deeply troubled by media reports alleging that “Federal law enforcement officials were directed to make public comments sympathetic to Mr. Kyle Rittenhouse,” including allegations that Federal officials were specifically encouraged to state that Mr. Rittenhouse had traveled to Wisconsin “to help defend small business owners.”<sup>1</sup>

As you know, Mr. Rittenhouse has been charged by officials in Kenosha, Wisconsin, with first-degree intentional homicide, first-degree reckless homicide, and other serious charges pertaining to the deaths on August 25, 2020, of Mr. Anthony Huber and Mr. Joseph Rosenbaum, as well as the wounding of another individual. These deaths occurred on an evening in which reports indicate that “armed self-appointed militia” had appeared among protestors opposing systemic racism after Mr. Jacob Blake was shot by police and left paralyzed.<sup>2</sup>

The incidents that gave rise to the charges against Mr. Rittenhouse were recorded on extensive video footage, and numerous opinions have been offered regarding the nature of the incidents recorded in the footage.<sup>3</sup> Among those who have offered statements that appear intended to defend Mr. Rittenhouse is President Trump, who stated that it appeared that Mr. Rittenhouse was “trying to get away” on the night of the incidents but that other individuals “violently attacked him.”<sup>4</sup>

The opinions allegedly contained in the talking points distributed by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) appear to mirror claims made in defense of Mr. Rittenhouse, including claims offered by his attorneys. For example, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that a lawyer representing Mr.

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<sup>1</sup> NBC News, *Internal document shows Trump officials were told to make comments sympathetic to Kyle Rittenhouse* (Oct. 1, 2020) (online at [www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/internal-document-shows-trump-officials-were-told-make-comments-sympathetic-n1241581](http://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/internal-document-shows-trump-officials-were-told-make-comments-sympathetic-n1241581)).

<sup>2</sup> WBEZ, *Charges Against Kyle Rittenhouse Detail Chaotic Kenosha Shootings* (Aug. 28, 2020) (online at [www.wbez.org/stories/charges-against-kyle-rittenhouse-detail-chaotic-kenosha-shootings/02de9af4-6a07-40bc-85ea-148c50a7ff14](http://www.wbez.org/stories/charges-against-kyle-rittenhouse-detail-chaotic-kenosha-shootings/02de9af4-6a07-40bc-85ea-148c50a7ff14)).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> USA Today, *Trump defends Kyle Rittenhouse on eve of visit to Kenosha* (Sept. 1, 2020) (online at [www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2020/08/31/trump-defends-kenosha-shooter-kyle-rittenhouse-arguing-self-defense/3451006001/](http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2020/08/31/trump-defends-kenosha-shooter-kyle-rittenhouse-arguing-self-defense/3451006001/)).

Rittenhouse claimed he is “a Minuteman protecting his community when the government would not” and “a shining example of the American fighting spirit.”<sup>5</sup> The *Wall Street Journal* also reported:

“Mr. Rittenhouse, his lawyers said, spent the day before the shooting working a shift as a community lifeguard in Kenosha, then going to a local high school to help remove graffiti. He and a friend decided to arm themselves and help protect a local business, the lawyers said, after hearing about a call for help. Before the shooting, they added, he had used a medical kit to help treat some injured protesters.”<sup>6</sup>

To enable the Committee to understand whether allegations regarding the Department’s production and/or use of talking points that opine on Mr. Rittenhouse’s actions and/or motives are true, the Committee requests that you provide in unredacted form by October 16, 2020, the following:

1. All talking points—including the final version of such points as well as all draft versions from any source, whether originating in the Department or provided to the Department by any other entity whether inside or outside the Federal government—utilizing any of the following terms: “Kyle Rittenhouse,” “law and order,” and/or “protestors” from August 25, 2020, to the present; and
2. All communications in any form referring or relating to all talking points responsive to the first request, including communications (a) between DHS employees (including all component agencies), (b) between and/or among employees of the Department and any official at the White House and/or any official with any other Federal Department or agency; and (c) between and/or among employees of the Department and any third party.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



BENNIE G. THOMPSON  
Chairman



LAUREN UNDERWOOD  
Vice Chairwoman



MAX ROSE  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on  
Intelligence and  
Counterterrorism

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<sup>5</sup> Wall Street Journal, *Kyle Rittenhouse Was Protecting Community During Kenosha Unrest, Lawyer Says* (Aug. 29, 2020) (online at [www.wsj.com/articles/kyle-rittenhouse-was-protecting-community-during-kenosha-unrest-lawyer-says-11598738127](http://www.wsj.com/articles/kyle-rittenhouse-was-protecting-community-during-kenosha-unrest-lawyer-says-11598738127)).

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*