

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

April 15, 2025

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Brooke Rollins
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins:

The Trump Administration’s politically-motivated campaign to decimate the federal workforce—recklessly driven by Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (“DOGE”)—has exacted devastating and lasting harm on the dedicated public servants who work for the American people, including your staff at the Department of Agriculture. We write to request information and records to assist the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs’ (“HSGAC” or “the Committee”) and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations’ (“PSI” or “the Subcommittee”) understanding of how Mr. Musk’s unprecedented and dangerous push to politicize and destabilize our civil service has impacted your agency.

Efforts to intimidate and traumatize federal civil servants through mass firings, forced leave, email threats, loyalty pledges, and more not only severely undermine the federal workforce morale, retention, and institutional knowledge, but jeopardize the critical, often life-saving services these workers deliver to the American people every day. While purportedly in the name of increased efficiency, the chaos sown by Mr. Musk’s reckless, arbitrary edicts to the federal workforce will ultimately cost the federal government far more than any imagined savings—generating tremendous amounts of needless waste. As the steward of your agency, we urge you to take all appropriate action to ensure the integrity of the Department of Agriculture, its workforce, and the services it performs for the American people.¹

The unjustified assault on the federal workforce has taken shape in numerous troubling ways. Mass firings, forced leave, and deferred resignations leave much smaller teams of remaining employees to shoulder impossible burdens. New and promoted probationary employees have been targeted and treated as disposable rather than as an investment in the future.² Thousands of public

¹ See, e.g., *Trump tells cabinet secretaries they, not Musk, are in charge of staff cuts*, REUTERS (Mar. 7, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-tells-cabinet-secretaries-they-not-musk-are-charge-staff-cuts-2025-03-06/>; *Inside the Explosive Meeting Where Trump Officials Clashed With Elon Musk*, NEW YORK TIMES (Mar. 13, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/07/us/politics/trump-musk-doge-power.html>.

² *OPM asks agencies to justify keeping probationary employees*, FEDERAL NEWS NETWORK (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/workforce/2025/02/opm-asks-agencies-to-justify-keeping-probationary-employees/>.

servants have been left in limbo, some stranded overseas, wondering if they still have a job.³ Others have been fired without regard to their critical functions, leaving agencies to scramble to re-hire them—such as those supervising our nuclear stockpile, tracking the spread of bird flu, and monitoring the safety of infant formula.⁴ Some employees were pressured to take buyout offers of up to \$25,000 under sudden and unreasonable deadlines.⁵ Still more have been beguiled by “deferred resignation” offers of dubious legality with shifting terms, enticing them with the promise of continued pay for no work, only to have the rug pulled from under them when they too are fired.⁶

The chaos imposed by the destructive Trump-Musk campaign to gut the federal workforce threatens the critical services that federal agencies provide to the American people. Firings at the Social Security Administration, for example, put payments to millions of beneficiaries in jeopardy.⁷ The Department of Veterans Affairs’ ability to care for our veterans and their families will be drastically undermined by unprecedented staffing reductions.⁸ The effective closure of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has removed thousands of federal workers whose jobs were to prevent American consumers from being targeted by financial scams.⁹ Indiscriminate staffing cuts at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Agency for International Development risk devastating impacts on farmers and rural communities.¹⁰ Layoffs at the Internal Revenue Service, Federal Housing Authority, and Department of Energy will make it easier for tax cheats to evade detection while driving up housing and energy costs for everyday taxpayers.¹¹ Moreover, mass firings and chaotic directives at the Federal Aviation Administration increase the risks of

³ *‘Thank you for your service’: Trump administration puts USAID staff on leave*, NPR (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/04/nx-s1-5287053/usaid-trump-overseas-withdrawal>; *‘We’re pawns in a game’: US aid workers left in limbo overseas as agency slashed*, BBC (Feb. 7, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cew5pen8edvo>.

⁴ *After mass layoffs, some federal agencies are trying to bring employees back*, NPR (Feb. 21, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/21/nx-s1-5304152/federal-government-layoffs-reversed>; *FDA moves to rehire medical device, food safety and other staffers fired days earlier*, ASSOC. PRESS (Feb. 24, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/fda-layoffs-trump-doge-rehired-medical-devices-85d4743e4ce88dbe3b99c813bad4b702>.

⁵ *Education Department to staffers: Quit by Monday and get \$25K in cash*, POLITICO (Feb. 28, 2025), <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/02/28/education-department-quit-00206765>; *HHS makes \$25,000 buyout offer to most of its workers as Trump administration continues cuts*, PBS (Mar. 9, 2025), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/hhs-makes-25000-buyout-offer-to-most-of-its-workers-as-trump-administration-continues-cuts>.

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⁷ *Social Security Employees Warn of Damage From DOGE*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 17, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/17/business/social-security-doge-ssa.html>.

⁸ *Chaos at the V.A.: Inside the DOGE Cuts Disrupting the Veterans Agency*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/09/us/politics/veterans-affairs-doge-cuts.html>.

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¹¹ *7 Ways DOGE’s Government Cuts Could Impact Everyone*, WASHINGTONIAN (Feb. 24, 2025), <https://www.washingtonian.com/2025/02/24/7-ways-doges-government-cuts-could-impact-everyone/>.

dangerous aviation incidents.¹² As one former senior Federal Aviation Administration executive explained, “People die when FAA workers are distracted and processes are broken.”¹³

The disconnect between the Trump Administration’s stated objective of improving efficiency and the destructive actions Mr. Musk has put into motion is not only absurd but also incredibly costly and wasteful. The campaign against the federal workforce will cost taxpayers dearly, both directly and indirectly. For example, in the name of fighting waste and abuse, thousands of federal employees have been ordered to take administrative leave—meaning they are being paid with taxpayer dollars to do nothing.¹⁴ The investments previously made to train thousands of now fired probationary employees will have zero return, and may need to be repeated when DOGE once again discovers that fired workers held crucial roles. As one fired Internal Revenue Service probationary employee complained, “I’m appalled my tax dollars were wasted on getting all those employees trained, and they didn’t even get the chance to get out of their probationary period.”¹⁵ Moreover, federal employee layoffs will cost the federal government billions of dollars in unemployment benefits and wrongful termination claims.¹⁶ Greatly diminished staffs of agencies providing critical public services will increasingly turn to profit-driven, private government contractors, driving up the cost to taxpayers while corporations pocket the difference.¹⁷ Meanwhile, at the same time that Mr. Musk slashes government workers in the name of efficiency, he is seeking to double the staff at DOGE and compensate his handpicked allies with six-figure salaries.¹⁸ DOGE’s budget has ballooned to nearly \$40 million and is financed mostly by payments from other agencies for DOGE employees.¹⁹ In one instance, they

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¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Russell Vought closes CFPB HQ, tells staff to stop work*, NPR (Feb. 10, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/08/nx-s1-5290914/russell-vought-cfpb-doge-access-musk; 'Playing games': Reinstated federal workers furious they're being paid to do nothing>, BUSINESS INSIDER (Mar. 21, 2025), <https://www.businessinsider.com/reinstated-fired-federal-workers-got-job-back-getting-paid-2025-3>.

¹⁵ *Stalled Audits and a Skeleton Staff: Inside Trump’s War on the I.R.S.*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 13, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/10/us/politics/irs-taxes-trump-musk-federal-workers.html>.

¹⁶ *Trump layoffs could cost government billions in unemployment payouts*, WASH. EXAMINER (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/white-house/3325231/trump-mass-layoffs-cost-government-billions-unemployment-benefits/>; *Federal workers were fired 'for performance.' Their records say otherwise*, REUTERS (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/federal-workers-were-fired-for-performance-their-records-say-otherwise-2025-02-20/>; *Nearly 6,000 USDA workers fired by Trump ordered back to work for now*, NPR (Mar. 5, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/03/05/nx-s1-5318687/usda-fired-federal-employees-probationary-osc-mspb>.

¹⁷ *Elon Musk’s mass government cuts could make private companies millions*, THE GUARDIAN (Feb. 16, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/feb/16/elon-musk-doge-government-privatization>.

¹⁸ *Elon Musk goes behind-the-scenes at DOGE, unveils biggest source of fraud in the world*, FOX BUSINESS (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.foxbusiness.com/media/elon-musk-goes-behind-the-scenes-doge-unveils-biggest-source-fraud; DOGE wants to charge one federal agency millions of dollars for its work to make government more efficient>, CNN POLITICS (Mar. 3, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/03/politics/doge-wants-to-charge-opm-millions/index.html>.

¹⁹ *DOGE’s Millions: As Musk and Trump Gut Government, Their Ax-Cutting Agency Gets Cash Infusion*, PROPUBLICA (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.propublica.org/article/doge-trump-musk-funding-foia-congress-transparency>.

charged an agency for 20 DOGE employees, which could amount to a \$4 million bill at the taxpayer's expense.²⁰

Beyond the sizeable and immediate economic impact resulting from disruptions to government functions, the broader effort to politicize the civil service endangers its vital, nonpartisan work. Reports have emerged of Trump loyalty tests and questionnaires being used to weed out those not deemed sufficiently loyal to the President instead of the U.S. Constitution and the rule of law.²¹ The revised Schedule Policy/Career and redesignations aimed at senior managers seek to weaken competitive hiring, remove protections from partisan discrimination, and permit politics to seep into every layer of government.²² Such transformation will open a revolving door for political operatives while driving away true talent, reverting federal employment to the corrupt spoils system rejected by federal law more than a century ago, a system where money and favor are elevated over merit and competence.²³

The American people deserve better from their government. The public deserves to know how agency leaders have been implementing DOGE purges, how they intend to manage their nonpartisan workforce in the future, and indeed whether they are following the law and established agency rules and policies. For the reasons stated above and pursuant to the authority under Senate Rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate and Senate Resolution 94 (119th Cong.), Section 12, please provide information responsive to the following requests by April 29, 2025, and on an ongoing basis every two (2) weeks thereafter.

1. Please provide the following information for your agency, broken down by each subagency:
 - a. The total number of employees as of January 20, 2025.
 - b. The total number of employees on probationary status²⁴ as of January 20, 2025, including the number employees on probationary status due to new hire status, recent promotion, inter or intra-agency transfer, or any other reason.

²⁰ CNN POLITICS, *supra* note 18.

²¹ *U.S. intelligence, law enforcement candidates face Trump loyalty test*, WASH. POST (Feb. 9, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/02/08/trump-administration-job-candidates-loyalty-screening/>; *Loyalty tests and MAGA checks: Inside the Trump White House's intense screening of job-seekers*, ASSOC. PRESS (Jan. 25, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/trump-loyalty-white-house-maga-vetting-jobs-768fa5cbcf175652655c86203222f47c>; *FBI advocates appeal to Congress as agents face scrutiny for Jan 6 work*, REUTERS (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/fbi-advocates-appeal-congress-agents-face-scrutiny-jan-6-work-2025-02-03/>.

²² *See Restoring Accountability To Policy-Influencing Positions Within the Federal Workforce*, THE WHITE HOUSE (Jan. 20, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/restoring-accountability-to-policy-influencing-positions-within-the-federal-workforce/>; U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Memorandum: Guidance Regarding Redesignating SES CIO Positions, (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.chcoc.gov/content/guidance-regarding-redesignating-ses-cio-positions>; U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Memorandum: Maintaining the Integrity of the Career Senior Executive Service, (Feb. 5, 2025), <https://www.chcoc.gov/content/maintaining-integrity-career-senior-executive-service>.

²³ *DOGE and the 'arson of a public asset'*, CNN POLITICS (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/10/politics/doge-federal-government-cuts>.

²⁴ For the purpose of this request, "probationary status" is to include probationary and trial periods.

- c. The number of separations processed since January 20, 2025, by the type of separation (e.g. the nature of action and legal authority code) and probationary status.
 - d. The number of employees who accepted the Deferred Resignation Program.
 - e. The number of requests under the Deferred Resignation Program that were denied by the agency including reasons why each request was denied.
 - f. The number of employees who accepted any other voluntary separation program you may have offered. Please specify the program (e.g., VISP or VERA) and total cost of these offers to date.
 - g. The number of employees who have been placed on administrative leave since January 20, 2025. Please specify the reasons and statutory or regulatory basis for each employee placed on administrative leave, including whether the employee was placed on administrative leave involuntarily, including the reason for using administrative leave voluntarily or involuntarily.
2. Please provide the following cost information associated with employees your agency has separated since January 20, 2025:
 - a. The total cost of salary and benefits (accrued or estimated) for all employees who accepted the Deferred Resignation Program and whose acceptances were not denied by the agency.
 - b. The total cost of any severance, buyout, or other lump sum payment offered through any program (e.g. VISP or VERA) since January 20, 2025.
 - c. The total cost of salary and benefits for any employees placed on administrative leave involuntarily for the duration of any period of administrative leave.
 - d. The total cost of training and onboarding conducted within the past two years for all probationary employees terminated since January 20, 2025.
 - e. The total cost of training for any current employees or contractors utilized by the agency to replace employees who have a) been separated from the agency through involuntary termination other than for cause, b) accepted the Deferred Resignation Program or other voluntary termination offer, or c) been involuntarily placed on administrative leave.
3. Since January 20, 2025, have you reinstated or reemployed any employees after their separation? If any, please provide the number of affected employees, the reason(s) for the separations, and the reason(s) for reinstatement or reemployment.
4. Please identify and explain in detail each factor considered in determining:
 - a. Which probationary employees to retain or separate;
 - b. Which employees to reinstate or reemploy following a separation;
 - c. Which employees to place on administrative leave;
 - d. Which employees would be eligible for the Deferred Resignation Program; and
 - e. Which employees would be eligible for any other voluntary separation program you have offered.
5. Who—including but not limited to supervisors, executives, attorneys, political appointees, contractors, labor organizations, human resources specialists, and parties

outside your organization—was consulted or involved in the processes described in question 4? Please describe the role of each identified party.

6. What records or tools, including but not limited to software, electronic systems, databases, questionnaires or surveys, automation tools, algorithms, and artificial intelligence (AI) platforms, were involved in the processes described in question 4? Please name each platform or program and explain in detail the role each played in the decision-making process.
7. What procedural or due process rights were afforded to the employees identified in question 1.b.? Were the employees identified in question 1.b. issued a written notice of their separation? What notice, if any, was provided to employees regarding their right to appeal or dispute the action?
8. Please indicate by subagency those who have been or will be involved or consulted in the process of drafting the following items, and the role of each identified party:
 - a. Agency Reduction in Force and Reorganization Plans;
 - b. Recommendations and petitions for moving positions into Schedule Policy/Career; and
 - c. Recommendations and petitions for redesignation of Senior Executive Service positions.

In addition, please provide the Committee and the Subcommittee with the following records²⁵ by April 29, 2025, and on an ongoing basis every two (2) weeks thereafter:

9. Agency Contingency Plans submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) since 2019.
10. All records transmitted by your agency to OPM or by OPM to your agency on or after January 20, 2025, referring or relating to:
 - a. Retaining or separating probationary employees;
 - b. Placing employees on administrative leave;
 - c. Determining employee eligibility for the Deferred Resignation Program or any other voluntary separation programs that have been offered to employees;
 - d. Employee performance data;
 - e. Agency Reduction in Force and Reorganization Plans;
 - f. Moving positions into Schedule Policy/Career; and
 - g. Redesignating Senior Executive Service positions.

²⁵ “Records” include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (text messages, WhatsApp or Signal messages, emails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).

Please contact the Committee and the Subcommittee should you have any questions about responding to these requests. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Gary Peters
Ranking Member
Committee Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs



Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on
Investigations

cc: The Honorable Rand Paul
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

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COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

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VIA EMAIL

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U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
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Dear Secretary Lutnick:

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servants have been left in limbo, some stranded overseas, wondering if they still have a job.³ Others have been fired without regard to their critical functions, leaving agencies to scramble to re-hire them—such as those supervising our nuclear stockpile, tracking the spread of bird flu, and monitoring the safety of infant formula.⁴ Some employees were pressured to take buyout offers of up to \$25,000 under sudden and unreasonable deadlines.⁵ Still more have been beguiled by “deferred resignation” offers of dubious legality with shifting terms, enticing them with the promise of continued pay for no work, only to have the rug pulled from under them when they too are fired.⁶

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¹⁴ *Russell Vought closes CFPB HQ, tells staff to stop work*, NPR (Feb. 10, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/08/nx-s1-5290914/russell-vought-cfpb-doge-access-musk; 'Playing games': Reinstated federal workers furious they're being paid to do nothing>, BUSINESS INSIDER (Mar. 21, 2025), <https://www.businessinsider.com/reinstated-fired-federal-workers-got-job-back-getting-paid-2025-3>.

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¹⁶ *Trump layoffs could cost government billions in unemployment payouts*, WASH. EXAMINER (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/white-house/3325231/trump-mass-layoffs-cost-government-billions-unemployment-benefits/>; *Federal workers were fired 'for performance.' Their records say otherwise*, REUTERS (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/federal-workers-were-fired-for-performance-their-records-say-otherwise-2025-02-20/>; *Nearly 6,000 USDA workers fired by Trump ordered back to work for now*, NPR (Mar. 5, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/03/05/nx-s1-5318687/usda-fired-federal-employees-probationary-osc-mspb>.

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¹⁸ *Elon Musk goes behind-the-scenes at DOGE, unveils biggest source of fraud in the world*, FOX BUSINESS (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.foxbusiness.com/media/elon-musk-goes-behind-the-scenes-doge-unveils-biggest-source-fraud; DOGE wants to charge one federal agency millions of dollars for its work to make government more efficient>, CNN POLITICS (Mar. 3, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/03/politics/doge-wants-to-charge-opm-millions/index.html>.

¹⁹ *DOGE’s Millions: As Musk and Trump Gut Government, Their Ax-Cutting Agency Gets Cash Infusion*, PROPUBLICA (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.propublica.org/article/doge-trump-musk-funding-foia-congress-transparency>.

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²⁰ CNN POLITICS, *supra* note 18.

²¹ *U.S. intelligence, law enforcement candidates face Trump loyalty test*, WASH. POST (Feb. 9, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/02/08/trump-administration-job-candidates-loyalty-screening/>; *Loyalty tests and MAGA checks: Inside the Trump White House's intense screening of job-seekers*, ASSOC. PRESS (Jan. 25, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/trump-loyalty-white-house-maga-vetting-jobs-768fa5cbcf175652655c86203222f47c>; *FBI advocates appeal to Congress as agents face scrutiny for Jan 6 work*, REUTERS (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/fbi-advocates-appeal-congress-agents-face-scrutiny-jan-6-work-2025-02-03/>.

²² *See Restoring Accountability To Policy-Influencing Positions Within the Federal Workforce*, THE WHITE HOUSE (Jan. 20, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/restoring-accountability-to-policy-influencing-positions-within-the-federal-workforce/>; U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Memorandum: Guidance Regarding Redesignating SES CIO Positions, (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.chcoc.gov/content/guidance-regarding-redesignating-ses-cio-positions>; U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Memorandum: Maintaining the Integrity of the Career Senior Executive Service, (Feb. 5, 2025), <https://www.chcoc.gov/content/maintaining-integrity-career-senior-executive-service>.

²³ *DOGE and the 'arson of a public asset'*, CNN POLITICS (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/10/politics/doge-federal-government-cuts>.

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- c. The number of separations processed since January 20, 2025, by the type of separation (e.g. the nature of action and legal authority code) and probationary status.
 - d. The number of employees who accepted the Deferred Resignation Program.
 - e. The number of requests under the Deferred Resignation Program that were denied by the agency including reasons why each request was denied.
 - f. The number of employees who accepted any other voluntary separation program you may have offered. Please specify the program (e.g., VISP or VERA) and total cost of these offers to date.
 - g. The number of employees who have been placed on administrative leave since January 20, 2025. Please specify the reasons and statutory or regulatory basis for each employee placed on administrative leave, including whether the employee was placed on administrative leave involuntarily, including the reason for using administrative leave voluntarily or involuntarily.
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outside your organization—was consulted or involved in the processes described in question 4? Please describe the role of each identified party.

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7. What procedural or due process rights were afforded to the employees identified in question 1.b.? Were the employees identified in question 1.b. issued a written notice of their separation? What notice, if any, was provided to employees regarding their right to appeal or dispute the action?
8. Please indicate by subagency those who have been or will be involved or consulted in the process of drafting the following items, and the role of each identified party:
 - a. Agency Reduction in Force and Reorganization Plans;
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In addition, please provide the Committee and the Subcommittee with the following records²⁵ by April 29, 2025, and on an ongoing basis every two (2) weeks thereafter:

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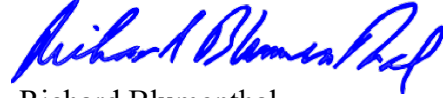
²⁵ “Records” include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (text messages, WhatsApp or Signal messages, emails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).

Please contact the Committee and the Subcommittee should you have any questions about responding to these requests. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Gary Peters
Ranking Member
Committee Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs



Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on
Investigations

cc: The Honorable Rand Paul
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

April 15, 2025

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Peter Hegseth
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Hegseth:

The Trump Administration’s politically-motivated campaign to decimate the federal workforce—recklessly driven by Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (“DOGE”)—has exacted devastating and lasting harm on the dedicated public servants who work for the American people, including your staff at the Department of Defense. We write to request information and records to assist the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs’ (“HSGAC” or “the Committee”) and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations’ (“PSI” or “the Subcommittee”) understanding of how Mr. Musk’s unprecedented and dangerous push to politicize and destabilize our civil service has impacted your agency.

Efforts to intimidate and traumatize federal civil servants through mass firings, forced leave, email threats, loyalty pledges, and more not only severely undermine the federal workforce morale, retention, and institutional knowledge, but jeopardize the critical, often life-saving services these workers deliver to the American people every day. While purportedly in the name of increased efficiency, the chaos sown by Mr. Musk’s reckless, arbitrary edicts to the federal workforce will ultimately cost the federal government far more than any imagined savings—generating tremendous amounts of needless waste. As the steward of your agency, we urge you to take all appropriate action to ensure the integrity of the Department of Defense, its workforce, and the services it performs for the American people.¹

The unjustified assault on the federal workforce has taken shape in numerous troubling ways. Mass firings, forced leave, and deferred resignations leave much smaller teams of remaining employees to shoulder impossible burdens. New and promoted probationary employees have been targeted and treated as disposable rather than as an investment in the future.² Thousands of public

¹ See, e.g., *Trump tells cabinet secretaries they, not Musk, are in charge of staff cuts*, REUTERS (Mar. 7, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-tells-cabinet-secretaries-they-not-musk-are-charge-staff-cuts-2025-03-06/>; *Inside the Explosive Meeting Where Trump Officials Clashed With Elon Musk*, NEW YORK TIMES (Mar. 13, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/07/us/politics/trump-musk-doge-power.html>.

² *OPM asks agencies to justify keeping probationary employees*, FEDERAL NEWS NETWORK (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/workforce/2025/02/opm-asks-agencies-to-justify-keeping-probationary-employees/>.

servants have been left in limbo, some stranded overseas, wondering if they still have a job.³ Others have been fired without regard to their critical functions, leaving agencies to scramble to re-hire them—such as those supervising our nuclear stockpile, tracking the spread of bird flu, and monitoring the safety of infant formula.⁴ Some employees were pressured to take buyout offers of up to \$25,000 under sudden and unreasonable deadlines.⁵ Still more have been beguiled by “deferred resignation” offers of dubious legality with shifting terms, enticing them with the promise of continued pay for no work, only to have the rug pulled from under them when they too are fired.⁶

The chaos imposed by the destructive Trump-Musk campaign to gut the federal workforce threatens the critical services that federal agencies provide to the American people. Firings at the Social Security Administration, for example, put payments to millions of beneficiaries in jeopardy.⁷ The Department of Veterans Affairs’ ability to care for our veterans and their families will be drastically undermined by unprecedented staffing reductions.⁸ The effective closure of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has removed thousands of federal workers whose jobs were to prevent American consumers from being targeted by financial scams.⁹ Indiscriminate staffing cuts at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Agency for International Development risk devastating impacts on farmers and rural communities.¹⁰ Layoffs at the Internal Revenue Service, Federal Housing Authority, and Department of Energy will make it easier for tax cheats to evade detection while driving up housing and energy costs for everyday taxpayers.¹¹ Moreover, mass firings and chaotic directives at the Federal Aviation Administration increase the risks of

³ *‘Thank you for your service’: Trump administration puts USAID staff on leave*, NPR (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/04/nx-s1-5287053/usaid-trump-overseas-withdrawal>; *‘We’re pawns in a game’: US aid workers left in limbo overseas as agency slashed*, BBC (Feb. 7, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cew5pen8edvo>.

⁴ *After mass layoffs, some federal agencies are trying to bring employees back*, NPR (Feb. 21, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/21/nx-s1-5304152/federal-government-layoffs-reversed>; *FDA moves to rehire medical device, food safety and other staffers fired days earlier*, ASSOC. PRESS (Feb. 24, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/fda-layoffs-trump-doge-rehired-medical-devices-85d4743e4ce88dbe3b99c813bad4b702>.

⁵ *Education Department to staffers: Quit by Monday and get \$25K in cash*, POLITICO (Feb. 28, 2025), <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/02/28/education-department-quit-00206765>; *HHS makes \$25,000 buyout offer to most of its workers as Trump administration continues cuts*, PBS (Mar. 9, 2025), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/hhs-makes-25000-buyout-offer-to-most-of-its-workers-as-trump-administration-continues-cuts>.

⁶ *These feds took Trump’s ‘fork’ deal. Then they got fired — creating a government ‘mess.’*, WASH. POST (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2025/02/20/fork-resignation-fired-anyway-trump-federal-workers/>.

⁷ *Social Security Employees Warn of Damage From DOGE*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 17, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/17/business/social-security-doge-ssa.html>.

⁸ *Chaos at the V.A.: Inside the DOGE Cuts Disrupting the Veterans Agency*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/09/us/politics/veterans-affairs-doge-cuts.html>.

⁹ *What’s at stake in DOGE’s CFPB shutdown*, AXIOS (Feb. 10, 2025), <https://www.axios.com/2025/02/10/doge-trump-cfpb-scammers>.

¹⁰ *Mass layoffs at USDA leave an uncertain future for researchers and rural areas*, NPR (Mar. 3, 2025), <https://www.kcur.org/2025-03-03/usda-mass-layoffs-researchers-uncertain-future>; *The USAID shutdown is upending livelihoods for nonprofit workers, farmers and other Americans*, ASSOC. PRESS (Feb. 18, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/trump-usaid-foreign-aid-shutdown-impact-fd4f9bb016f1acf7fb1c2fae7a5c32f5>.

¹¹ *7 Ways DOGE’s Government Cuts Could Impact Everyone*, WASHINGTONIAN (Feb. 24, 2025), <https://www.washingtonian.com/2025/02/24/7-ways-doges-government-cuts-could-impact-everyone/>.

dangerous aviation incidents.¹² As one former senior Federal Aviation Administration executive explained, “People die when FAA workers are distracted and processes are broken.”¹³

The disconnect between the Trump Administration’s stated objective of improving efficiency and the destructive actions Mr. Musk has put into motion is not only absurd but also incredibly costly and wasteful. The campaign against the federal workforce will cost taxpayers dearly, both directly and indirectly. For example, in the name of fighting waste and abuse, thousands of federal employees have been ordered to take administrative leave—meaning they are being paid with taxpayer dollars to do nothing.¹⁴ The investments previously made to train thousands of now fired probationary employees will have zero return, and may need to be repeated when DOGE once again discovers that fired workers held crucial roles. As one fired Internal Revenue Service probationary employee complained, “I’m appalled my tax dollars were wasted on getting all those employees trained, and they didn’t even get the chance to get out of their probationary period.”¹⁵ Moreover, federal employee layoffs will cost the federal government billions of dollars in unemployment benefits and wrongful termination claims.¹⁶ Greatly diminished staffs of agencies providing critical public services will increasingly turn to profit-driven, private government contractors, driving up the cost to taxpayers while corporations pocket the difference.¹⁷ Meanwhile, at the same time that Mr. Musk slashes government workers in the name of efficiency, he is seeking to double the staff at DOGE and compensate his handpicked allies with six-figure salaries.¹⁸ DOGE’s budget has ballooned to nearly \$40 million and is financed mostly by payments from other agencies for DOGE employees.¹⁹ In one instance, they

¹² *The FAA’s Troubles Are More Serious Than You Know*, THE ATLANTIC (Mar. 9, 2025), <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2025/03/faa-trump-elon-plane-crash/681975/>.

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Russell Vought closes CFPB HQ, tells staff to stop work*, NPR (Feb. 10, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/08/nx-s1-5290914/russell-vought-cfpb-doge-access-musk; 'Playing games': Reinstated federal workers furious they're being paid to do nothing>, BUSINESS INSIDER (Mar. 21, 2025), <https://www.businessinsider.com/reinstated-fired-federal-workers-got-job-back-getting-paid-2025-3>.

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²³ *DOGE and the 'arson of a public asset'*, CNN POLITICS (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/10/politics/doge-federal-government-cuts>.

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 - c. Determining employee eligibility for the Deferred Resignation Program or any other voluntary separation programs that have been offered to employees;
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 - e. Agency Reduction in Force and Reorganization Plans;
 - f. Moving positions into Schedule Policy/Career; and
 - g. Redesignating Senior Executive Service positions.

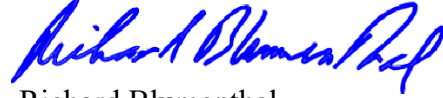
²⁵ “Records” include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (text messages, WhatsApp or Signal messages, emails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).

Please contact the Committee and the Subcommittee should you have any questions about responding to these requests. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Gary Peters
Ranking Member
Committee Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs



Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on
Investigations

cc: The Honorable Rand Paul
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

April 15, 2025

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Linda McMahon
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary McMahon:

The Trump Administration’s politically-motivated campaign to decimate the federal workforce—recklessly driven by Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (“DOGE”)—has exacted devastating and lasting harm on the dedicated public servants who work for the American people, including your staff at the Department of Education. We write to request information and records to assist the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs’ (“HSGAC” or “the Committee”) and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations’ (“PSI” or “the Subcommittee”) understanding of how Mr. Musk’s unprecedented and dangerous push to politicize and destabilize our civil service has impacted your agency.

Efforts to intimidate and traumatize federal civil servants through mass firings, forced leave, email threats, loyalty pledges, and more not only severely undermine the federal workforce morale, retention, and institutional knowledge, but jeopardize the critical, often life-saving services these workers deliver to the American people every day. While purportedly in the name of increased efficiency, the chaos sown by Mr. Musk’s reckless, arbitrary edicts to the federal workforce will ultimately cost the federal government far more than any imagined savings—generating tremendous amounts of needless waste. As the steward of your agency, we urge you to take all appropriate action to ensure the integrity of the Department of Education, its workforce, and the services it performs for the American people.¹

The unjustified assault on the federal workforce has taken shape in numerous troubling ways. Mass firings, forced leave, and deferred resignations leave much smaller teams of remaining employees to shoulder impossible burdens. New and promoted probationary employees have been targeted and treated as disposable rather than as an investment in the future.² Thousands of public

¹ See, e.g., *Trump tells cabinet secretaries they, not Musk, are in charge of staff cuts*, REUTERS (Mar. 7, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-tells-cabinet-secretaries-they-not-musk-are-charge-staff-cuts-2025-03-06/>; *Inside the Explosive Meeting Where Trump Officials Clashed With Elon Musk*, NEW YORK TIMES (Mar. 13, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/07/us/politics/trump-musk-doge-power.html>.

² *OPM asks agencies to justify keeping probationary employees*, FEDERAL NEWS NETWORK (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/workforce/2025/02/opm-asks-agencies-to-justify-keeping-probationary-employees/>.

servants have been left in limbo, some stranded overseas, wondering if they still have a job.³ Others have been fired without regard to their critical functions, leaving agencies to scramble to re-hire them—such as those supervising our nuclear stockpile, tracking the spread of bird flu, and monitoring the safety of infant formula.⁴ Some employees were pressured to take buyout offers of up to \$25,000 under sudden and unreasonable deadlines.⁵ Still more have been beguiled by “deferred resignation” offers of dubious legality with shifting terms, enticing them with the promise of continued pay for no work, only to have the rug pulled from under them when they too are fired.⁶

The chaos imposed by the destructive Trump-Musk campaign to gut the federal workforce threatens the critical services that federal agencies provide to the American people. Firings at the Social Security Administration, for example, put payments to millions of beneficiaries in jeopardy.⁷ The Department of Veterans Affairs’ ability to care for our veterans and their families will be drastically undermined by unprecedented staffing reductions.⁸ The effective closure of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has removed thousands of federal workers whose jobs were to prevent American consumers from being targeted by financial scams.⁹ Indiscriminate staffing cuts at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Agency for International Development risk devastating impacts on farmers and rural communities.¹⁰ Layoffs at the Internal Revenue Service, Federal Housing Authority, and Department of Energy will make it easier for tax cheats to evade detection while driving up housing and energy costs for everyday taxpayers.¹¹ Moreover, mass firings and chaotic directives at the Federal Aviation Administration increase the risks of

³ *‘Thank you for your service’: Trump administration puts USAID staff on leave*, NPR (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/04/nx-s1-5287053/usaid-trump-overseas-withdrawal>; *‘We’re pawns in a game’: US aid workers left in limbo overseas as agency slashed*, BBC (Feb. 7, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cew5pen8edvo>.

⁴ *After mass layoffs, some federal agencies are trying to bring employees back*, NPR (Feb. 21, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/21/nx-s1-5304152/federal-government-layoffs-reversed>; *FDA moves to rehire medical device, food safety and other staffers fired days earlier*, ASSOC. PRESS (Feb. 24, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/fda-layoffs-trump-doge-rehired-medical-devices-85d4743e4ce88dbe3b99c813bad4b702>.

⁵ *Education Department to staffers: Quit by Monday and get \$25K in cash*, POLITICO (Feb. 28, 2025), <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/02/28/education-department-quit-00206765>; *HHS makes \$25,000 buyout offer to most of its workers as Trump administration continues cuts*, PBS (Mar. 9, 2025), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/hhs-makes-25000-buyout-offer-to-most-of-its-workers-as-trump-administration-continues-cuts>.

⁶ *These feds took Trump’s ‘fork’ deal. Then they got fired — creating a government ‘mess.’*, WASH. POST (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2025/02/20/fork-resignation-fired-anyway-trump-federal-workers/>.

⁷ *Social Security Employees Warn of Damage From DOGE*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 17, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/17/business/social-security-doge-ssa.html>.

⁸ *Chaos at the V.A.: Inside the DOGE Cuts Disrupting the Veterans Agency*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/09/us/politics/veterans-affairs-doge-cuts.html>.

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¹¹ *7 Ways DOGE’s Government Cuts Could Impact Everyone*, WASHINGTONIAN (Feb. 24, 2025), <https://www.washingtonian.com/2025/02/24/7-ways-doges-government-cuts-could-impact-everyone/>.

dangerous aviation incidents.¹² As one former senior Federal Aviation Administration executive explained, “People die when FAA workers are distracted and processes are broken.”¹³

The disconnect between the Trump Administration’s stated objective of improving efficiency and the destructive actions Mr. Musk has put into motion is not only absurd but also incredibly costly and wasteful. The campaign against the federal workforce will cost taxpayers dearly, both directly and indirectly. For example, in the name of fighting waste and abuse, thousands of federal employees have been ordered to take administrative leave—meaning they are being paid with taxpayer dollars to do nothing.¹⁴ The investments previously made to train thousands of now fired probationary employees will have zero return, and may need to be repeated when DOGE once again discovers that fired workers held crucial roles. As one fired Internal Revenue Service probationary employee complained, “I’m appalled my tax dollars were wasted on getting all those employees trained, and they didn’t even get the chance to get out of their probationary period.”¹⁵ Moreover, federal employee layoffs will cost the federal government billions of dollars in unemployment benefits and wrongful termination claims.¹⁶ Greatly diminished staffs of agencies providing critical public services will increasingly turn to profit-driven, private government contractors, driving up the cost to taxpayers while corporations pocket the difference.¹⁷ Meanwhile, at the same time that Mr. Musk slashes government workers in the name of efficiency, he is seeking to double the staff at DOGE and compensate his handpicked allies with six-figure salaries.¹⁸ DOGE’s budget has ballooned to nearly \$40 million and is financed mostly by payments from other agencies for DOGE employees.¹⁹ In one instance, they

¹² *The FAA’s Troubles Are More Serious Than You Know*, THE ATLANTIC (Mar. 9, 2025), <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2025/03/faa-trump-elon-plane-crash/681975/>.

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Russell Vought closes CFPB HQ, tells staff to stop work*, NPR (Feb. 10, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/08/nx-s1-5290914/russell-vought-cfpb-doge-access-musk; 'Playing games': Reinstated federal workers furious they're being paid to do nothing>, BUSINESS INSIDER (Mar. 21, 2025), <https://www.businessinsider.com/reinstated-fired-federal-workers-got-job-back-getting-paid-2025-3>.

¹⁵ *Stalled Audits and a Skeleton Staff: Inside Trump’s War on the I.R.S.*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 13, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/10/us/politics/irs-taxes-trump-musk-federal-workers.html>.

¹⁶ *Trump layoffs could cost government billions in unemployment payouts*, WASH. EXAMINER (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/white-house/3325231/trump-mass-layoffs-cost-government-billions-unemployment-benefits/>; *Federal workers were fired 'for performance.' Their records say otherwise*, REUTERS (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/federal-workers-were-fired-for-performance-their-records-say-otherwise-2025-02-20/>; *Nearly 6,000 USDA workers fired by Trump ordered back to work for now*, NPR (Mar. 5, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/03/05/nx-s1-5318687/usda-fired-federal-employees-probationary-osc-mspb>.

¹⁷ *Elon Musk’s mass government cuts could make private companies millions*, THE GUARDIAN (Feb. 16, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/feb/16/elon-musk-doge-government-privatization>.

¹⁸ *Elon Musk goes behind-the-scenes at DOGE, unveils biggest source of fraud in the world*, FOX BUSINESS (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.foxbusiness.com/media/elon-musk-goes-behind-the-scenes-doge-unveils-biggest-source-fraud; DOGE wants to charge one federal agency millions of dollars for its work to make government more efficient>, CNN POLITICS (Mar. 3, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/03/politics/doge-wants-to-charge-opm-millions/index.html>.

¹⁹ *DOGE’s Millions: As Musk and Trump Gut Government, Their Ax-Cutting Agency Gets Cash Infusion*, PROPUBLICA (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.propublica.org/article/doge-trump-musk-funding-foia-congress-transparency>.

charged an agency for 20 DOGE employees, which could amount to a \$4 million bill at the taxpayer's expense.²⁰

Beyond the sizeable and immediate economic impact resulting from disruptions to government functions, the broader effort to politicize the civil service endangers its vital, nonpartisan work. Reports have emerged of Trump loyalty tests and questionnaires being used to weed out those not deemed sufficiently loyal to the President instead of the U.S. Constitution and the rule of law.²¹ The revised Schedule Policy/Career and redesignations aimed at senior managers seek to weaken competitive hiring, remove protections from partisan discrimination, and permit politics to seep into every layer of government.²² Such transformation will open a revolving door for political operatives while driving away true talent, reverting federal employment to the corrupt spoils system rejected by federal law more than a century ago, a system where money and favor are elevated over merit and competence.²³

The American people deserve better from their government. The public deserves to know how agency leaders have been implementing DOGE purges, how they intend to manage their nonpartisan workforce in the future, and indeed whether they are following the law and established agency rules and policies. For the reasons stated above and pursuant to the authority under Senate Rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate and Senate Resolution 94 (119th Cong.), Section 12, please provide information responsive to the following requests by April 29, 2025, and on an ongoing basis every two (2) weeks thereafter.

1. Please provide the following information for your agency, broken down by each subagency:
 - a. The total number of employees as of January 20, 2025.
 - b. The total number of employees on probationary status²⁴ as of January 20, 2025, including the number employees on probationary status due to new hire status, recent promotion, inter or intra-agency transfer, or any other reason.

²⁰ CNN POLITICS, *supra* note 18.

²¹ *U.S. intelligence, law enforcement candidates face Trump loyalty test*, WASH. POST (Feb. 9, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/02/08/trump-administration-job-candidates-loyalty-screening/>; *Loyalty tests and MAGA checks: Inside the Trump White House's intense screening of job-seekers*, ASSOC. PRESS (Jan. 25, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/trump-loyalty-white-house-maga-vetting-jobs-768fa5cbcf175652655c86203222f47c>; *FBI advocates appeal to Congress as agents face scrutiny for Jan 6 work*, REUTERS (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/fbi-advocates-appeal-congress-agents-face-scrutiny-jan-6-work-2025-02-03/>.

²² *See Restoring Accountability To Policy-Influencing Positions Within the Federal Workforce*, THE WHITE HOUSE (Jan. 20, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/restoring-accountability-to-policy-influencing-positions-within-the-federal-workforce/>; U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Memorandum: Guidance Regarding Redesignating SES CIO Positions, (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.chcoc.gov/content/guidance-regarding-redesignating-ses-cio-positions>; U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Memorandum: Maintaining the Integrity of the Career Senior Executive Service, (Feb. 5, 2025), <https://www.chcoc.gov/content/maintaining-integrity-career-senior-executive-service>.

²³ *DOGE and the 'arson of a public asset'*, CNN POLITICS (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/10/politics/doge-federal-government-cuts>.

²⁴ For the purpose of this request, "probationary status" is to include probationary and trial periods.

- c. The number of separations processed since January 20, 2025, by the type of separation (e.g. the nature of action and legal authority code) and probationary status.
 - d. The number of employees who accepted the Deferred Resignation Program.
 - e. The number of requests under the Deferred Resignation Program that were denied by the agency including reasons why each request was denied.
 - f. The number of employees who accepted any other voluntary separation program you may have offered. Please specify the program (e.g., VISP or VERA) and total cost of these offers to date.
 - g. The number of employees who have been placed on administrative leave since January 20, 2025. Please specify the reasons and statutory or regulatory basis for each employee placed on administrative leave, including whether the employee was placed on administrative leave involuntarily, including the reason for using administrative leave voluntarily or involuntarily.
2. Please provide the following cost information associated with employees your agency has separated since January 20, 2025:
 - a. The total cost of salary and benefits (accrued or estimated) for all employees who accepted the Deferred Resignation Program and whose acceptances were not denied by the agency.
 - b. The total cost of any severance, buyout, or other lump sum payment offered through any program (e.g. VISP or VERA) since January 20, 2025.
 - c. The total cost of salary and benefits for any employees placed on administrative leave involuntarily for the duration of any period of administrative leave.
 - d. The total cost of training and onboarding conducted within the past two years for all probationary employees terminated since January 20, 2025.
 - e. The total cost of training for any current employees or contractors utilized by the agency to replace employees who have a) been separated from the agency through involuntary termination other than for cause, b) accepted the Deferred Resignation Program or other voluntary termination offer, or c) been involuntarily placed on administrative leave.
3. Since January 20, 2025, have you reinstated or reemployed any employees after their separation? If any, please provide the number of affected employees, the reason(s) for the separations, and the reason(s) for reinstatement or reemployment.
4. Please identify and explain in detail each factor considered in determining:
 - a. Which probationary employees to retain or separate;
 - b. Which employees to reinstate or reemploy following a separation;
 - c. Which employees to place on administrative leave;
 - d. Which employees would be eligible for the Deferred Resignation Program; and
 - e. Which employees would be eligible for any other voluntary separation program you have offered.
5. Who—including but not limited to supervisors, executives, attorneys, political appointees, contractors, labor organizations, human resources specialists, and parties

outside your organization—was consulted or involved in the processes described in question 4? Please describe the role of each identified party.

6. What records or tools, including but not limited to software, electronic systems, databases, questionnaires or surveys, automation tools, algorithms, and artificial intelligence (AI) platforms, were involved in the processes described in question 4? Please name each platform or program and explain in detail the role each played in the decision-making process.
7. What procedural or due process rights were afforded to the employees identified in question 1.b.? Were the employees identified in question 1.b. issued a written notice of their separation? What notice, if any, was provided to employees regarding their right to appeal or dispute the action?
8. Please indicate by subagency those who have been or will be involved or consulted in the process of drafting the following items, and the role of each identified party:
 - a. Agency Reduction in Force and Reorganization Plans;
 - b. Recommendations and petitions for moving positions into Schedule Policy/Career; and
 - c. Recommendations and petitions for redesignation of Senior Executive Service positions.

In addition, please provide the Committee and the Subcommittee with the following records²⁵ by April 29, 2025, and on an ongoing basis every two (2) weeks thereafter:

9. Agency Contingency Plans submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) since 2019.
10. All records transmitted by your agency to OPM or by OPM to your agency on or after January 20, 2025, referring or relating to:
 - a. Retaining or separating probationary employees;
 - b. Placing employees on administrative leave;
 - c. Determining employee eligibility for the Deferred Resignation Program or any other voluntary separation programs that have been offered to employees;
 - d. Employee performance data;
 - e. Agency Reduction in Force and Reorganization Plans;
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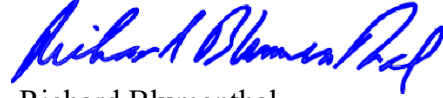
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Please contact the Committee and the Subcommittee should you have any questions about responding to these requests. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Gary Peters
Ranking Member
Committee Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs



Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on
Investigations

cc: The Honorable Rand Paul
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

April 15, 2025

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Chris Wright
Secretary of Energy
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Secretary Wright:

The Trump Administration’s politically-motivated campaign to decimate the federal workforce—recklessly driven by Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (“DOGE”)—has exacted devastating and lasting harm on the dedicated public servants who work for the American people, including your staff at the Department of Energy. We write to request information and records to assist the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs’ (“HSGAC” or “the Committee”) and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations’ (“PSI” or “the Subcommittee”) understanding of how Mr. Musk’s unprecedented and dangerous push to politicize and destabilize our civil service has impacted your agency.

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The unjustified assault on the federal workforce has taken shape in numerous troubling ways. Mass firings, forced leave, and deferred resignations leave much smaller teams of remaining employees to shoulder impossible burdens. New and promoted probationary employees have been targeted and treated as disposable rather than as an investment in the future.² Thousands of public

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² *OPM asks agencies to justify keeping probationary employees*, FEDERAL NEWS NETWORK (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/workforce/2025/02/opm-asks-agencies-to-justify-keeping-probationary-employees/>.

servants have been left in limbo, some stranded overseas, wondering if they still have a job.³ Others have been fired without regard to their critical functions, leaving agencies to scramble to re-hire them—such as those supervising our nuclear stockpile, tracking the spread of bird flu, and monitoring the safety of infant formula.⁴ Some employees were pressured to take buyout offers of up to \$25,000 under sudden and unreasonable deadlines.⁵ Still more have been beguiled by “deferred resignation” offers of dubious legality with shifting terms, enticing them with the promise of continued pay for no work, only to have the rug pulled from under them when they too are fired.⁶

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⁸ *Chaos at the V.A.: Inside the DOGE Cuts Disrupting the Veterans Agency*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/09/us/politics/veterans-affairs-doge-cuts.html>.

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The disconnect between the Trump Administration’s stated objective of improving efficiency and the destructive actions Mr. Musk has put into motion is not only absurd but also incredibly costly and wasteful. The campaign against the federal workforce will cost taxpayers dearly, both directly and indirectly. For example, in the name of fighting waste and abuse, thousands of federal employees have been ordered to take administrative leave—meaning they are being paid with taxpayer dollars to do nothing.¹⁴ The investments previously made to train thousands of now fired probationary employees will have zero return, and may need to be repeated when DOGE once again discovers that fired workers held crucial roles. As one fired Internal Revenue Service probationary employee complained, “I’m appalled my tax dollars were wasted on getting all those employees trained, and they didn’t even get the chance to get out of their probationary period.”¹⁵ Moreover, federal employee layoffs will cost the federal government billions of dollars in unemployment benefits and wrongful termination claims.¹⁶ Greatly diminished staffs of agencies providing critical public services will increasingly turn to profit-driven, private government contractors, driving up the cost to taxpayers while corporations pocket the difference.¹⁷ Meanwhile, at the same time that Mr. Musk slashes government workers in the name of efficiency, he is seeking to double the staff at DOGE and compensate his handpicked allies with six-figure salaries.¹⁸ DOGE’s budget has ballooned to nearly \$40 million and is financed mostly by payments from other agencies for DOGE employees.¹⁹ In one instance, they

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¹³ *Id.*

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Beyond the sizeable and immediate economic impact resulting from disruptions to government functions, the broader effort to politicize the civil service endangers its vital, nonpartisan work. Reports have emerged of Trump loyalty tests and questionnaires being used to weed out those not deemed sufficiently loyal to the President instead of the U.S. Constitution and the rule of law.²¹ The revised Schedule Policy/Career and redesignations aimed at senior managers seek to weaken competitive hiring, remove protections from partisan discrimination, and permit politics to seep into every layer of government.²² Such transformation will open a revolving door for political operatives while driving away true talent, reverting federal employment to the corrupt spoils system rejected by federal law more than a century ago, a system where money and favor are elevated over merit and competence.²³

The American people deserve better from their government. The public deserves to know how agency leaders have been implementing DOGE purges, how they intend to manage their nonpartisan workforce in the future, and indeed whether they are following the law and established agency rules and policies. For the reasons stated above and pursuant to the authority under Senate Rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate and Senate Resolution 94 (119th Cong.), Section 12, please provide information responsive to the following requests by April 29, 2025, and on an ongoing basis every two (2) weeks thereafter.

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²³ *DOGE and the 'arson of a public asset'*, CNN POLITICS (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/10/politics/doge-federal-government-cuts>.

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- c. The number of separations processed since January 20, 2025, by the type of separation (e.g. the nature of action and legal authority code) and probationary status.
 - d. The number of employees who accepted the Deferred Resignation Program.
 - e. The number of requests under the Deferred Resignation Program that were denied by the agency including reasons why each request was denied.
 - f. The number of employees who accepted any other voluntary separation program you may have offered. Please specify the program (e.g., VISP or VERA) and total cost of these offers to date.
 - g. The number of employees who have been placed on administrative leave since January 20, 2025. Please specify the reasons and statutory or regulatory basis for each employee placed on administrative leave, including whether the employee was placed on administrative leave involuntarily, including the reason for using administrative leave voluntarily or involuntarily.
2. Please provide the following cost information associated with employees your agency has separated since January 20, 2025:
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 - b. The total cost of any severance, buyout, or other lump sum payment offered through any program (e.g. VISP or VERA) since January 20, 2025.
 - c. The total cost of salary and benefits for any employees placed on administrative leave involuntarily for the duration of any period of administrative leave.
 - d. The total cost of training and onboarding conducted within the past two years for all probationary employees terminated since January 20, 2025.
 - e. The total cost of training for any current employees or contractors utilized by the agency to replace employees who have a) been separated from the agency through involuntary termination other than for cause, b) accepted the Deferred Resignation Program or other voluntary termination offer, or c) been involuntarily placed on administrative leave.
3. Since January 20, 2025, have you reinstated or reemployed any employees after their separation? If any, please provide the number of affected employees, the reason(s) for the separations, and the reason(s) for reinstatement or reemployment.
4. Please identify and explain in detail each factor considered in determining:
 - a. Which probationary employees to retain or separate;
 - b. Which employees to reinstate or reemploy following a separation;
 - c. Which employees to place on administrative leave;
 - d. Which employees would be eligible for the Deferred Resignation Program; and
 - e. Which employees would be eligible for any other voluntary separation program you have offered.
5. Who—including but not limited to supervisors, executives, attorneys, political appointees, contractors, labor organizations, human resources specialists, and parties

outside your organization—was consulted or involved in the processes described in question 4? Please describe the role of each identified party.

6. What records or tools, including but not limited to software, electronic systems, databases, questionnaires or surveys, automation tools, algorithms, and artificial intelligence (AI) platforms, were involved in the processes described in question 4? Please name each platform or program and explain in detail the role each played in the decision-making process.
7. What procedural or due process rights were afforded to the employees identified in question 1.b.? Were the employees identified in question 1.b. issued a written notice of their separation? What notice, if any, was provided to employees regarding their right to appeal or dispute the action?
8. Please indicate by subagency those who have been or will be involved or consulted in the process of drafting the following items, and the role of each identified party:
 - a. Agency Reduction in Force and Reorganization Plans;
 - b. Recommendations and petitions for moving positions into Schedule Policy/Career; and
 - c. Recommendations and petitions for redesignation of Senior Executive Service positions.

In addition, please provide the Committee and the Subcommittee with the following records²⁵ by April 29, 2025, and on an ongoing basis every two (2) weeks thereafter:

9. Agency Contingency Plans submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) since 2019.
10. All records transmitted by your agency to OPM or by OPM to your agency on or after January 20, 2025, referring or relating to:
 - a. Retaining or separating probationary employees;
 - b. Placing employees on administrative leave;
 - c. Determining employee eligibility for the Deferred Resignation Program or any other voluntary separation programs that have been offered to employees;
 - d. Employee performance data;
 - e. Agency Reduction in Force and Reorganization Plans;
 - f. Moving positions into Schedule Policy/Career; and
 - g. Redesignating Senior Executive Service positions.

²⁵ “Records” include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (text messages, WhatsApp or Signal messages, emails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).

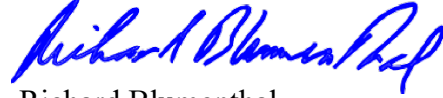
The Honorable Chris Wright
April 15, 2025
Page 7

Please contact the Committee and the Subcommittee should you have any questions about responding to these requests. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Gary Peters
Ranking Member
Committee Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs



Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on
Investigations

cc: The Honorable Rand Paul
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

April 15, 2025

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr.
Secretary of Health and Human Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Kennedy:

The Trump Administration's politically-motivated campaign to decimate the federal workforce—recklessly driven by Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (“DOGE”)—has exacted devastating and lasting harm on the dedicated public servants who work for the American people, including your staff at the Department of Health and Human Services. We write to request information and records to assist the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs’ (“HSGAC” or “the Committee”) and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations’ (“PSI” or “the Subcommittee”) understanding of how Mr. Musk’s unprecedented and dangerous push to politicize and destabilize our civil service has impacted your agency.

Efforts to intimidate and traumatize federal civil servants through mass firings, forced leave, email threats, loyalty pledges, and more not only severely undermine the federal workforce morale, retention, and institutional knowledge, but jeopardize the critical, often life-saving services these workers deliver to the American people every day. While purportedly in the name of increased efficiency, the chaos sown by Mr. Musk’s reckless, arbitrary edicts to the federal workforce will ultimately cost the federal government far more than any imagined savings—generating tremendous amounts of needless waste. As the steward of your agency, we urge you to take all appropriate action to ensure the integrity of the Department of Health and Human Services, its workforce, and the services it performs for the American people.¹

The unjustified assault on the federal workforce has taken shape in numerous troubling ways. Mass firings, forced leave, and deferred resignations leave much smaller teams of remaining employees to shoulder impossible burdens. New and promoted probationary employees have been targeted and treated as disposable rather than as an investment in the future.² Thousands of public

¹ See, e.g., *Trump tells cabinet secretaries they, not Musk, are in charge of staff cuts*, REUTERS (Mar. 7, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-tells-cabinet-secretaries-they-not-musk-are-charge-staff-cuts-2025-03-06/>; *Inside the Explosive Meeting Where Trump Officials Clashed With Elon Musk*, NEW YORK TIMES (Mar. 13, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/07/us/politics/trump-musk-doge-power.html>.

² *OPM asks agencies to justify keeping probationary employees*, FEDERAL NEWS NETWORK (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/workforce/2025/02/opm-asks-agencies-to-justify-keeping-probationary-employees/>.

servants have been left in limbo, some stranded overseas, wondering if they still have a job.³ Others have been fired without regard to their critical functions, leaving agencies to scramble to re-hire them—such as those supervising our nuclear stockpile, tracking the spread of bird flu, and monitoring the safety of infant formula.⁴ Some employees were pressured to take buyout offers of up to \$25,000 under sudden and unreasonable deadlines.⁵ Still more have been beguiled by “deferred resignation” offers of dubious legality with shifting terms, enticing them with the promise of continued pay for no work, only to have the rug pulled from under them when they too are fired.⁶

The chaos imposed by the destructive Trump-Musk campaign to gut the federal workforce threatens the critical services that federal agencies provide to the American people. Firings at the Social Security Administration, for example, put payments to millions of beneficiaries in jeopardy.⁷ The Department of Veterans Affairs’ ability to care for our veterans and their families will be drastically undermined by unprecedented staffing reductions.⁸ The effective closure of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has removed thousands of federal workers whose jobs were to prevent American consumers from being targeted by financial scams.⁹ Indiscriminate staffing cuts at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Agency for International Development risk devastating impacts on farmers and rural communities.¹⁰ Layoffs at the Internal Revenue Service, Federal Housing Authority, and Department of Energy will make it easier for tax cheats to evade detection while driving up housing and energy costs for everyday taxpayers.¹¹ Moreover, mass firings and chaotic directives at the Federal Aviation Administration increase the risks of

³ *‘Thank you for your service’: Trump administration puts USAID staff on leave*, NPR (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/04/nx-s1-5287053/usaid-trump-overseas-withdrawal>; *‘We’re pawns in a game’: US aid workers left in limbo overseas as agency slashed*, BBC (Feb. 7, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cew5pen8edvo>.

⁴ *After mass layoffs, some federal agencies are trying to bring employees back*, NPR (Feb. 21, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/21/nx-s1-5304152/federal-government-layoffs-reversed>; *FDA moves to rehire medical device, food safety and other staffers fired days earlier*, ASSOC. PRESS (Feb. 24, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/fda-layoffs-trump-doge-rehired-medical-devices-85d4743e4ce88dbe3b99c813bad4b702>.

⁵ *Education Department to staffers: Quit by Monday and get \$25K in cash*, POLITICO (Feb. 28, 2025), <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/02/28/education-department-quit-00206765>; *HHS makes \$25,000 buyout offer to most of its workers as Trump administration continues cuts*, PBS (Mar. 9, 2025), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/hhs-makes-25000-buyout-offer-to-most-of-its-workers-as-trump-administration-continues-cuts>.

⁶ *These feds took Trump’s ‘fork’ deal. Then they got fired — creating a government ‘mess.’*, WASH. POST (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2025/02/20/fork-resignation-fired-anyway-trump-federal-workers/>.

⁷ *Social Security Employees Warn of Damage From DOGE*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 17, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/17/business/social-security-doge-ssa.html>.

⁸ *Chaos at the V.A.: Inside the DOGE Cuts Disrupting the Veterans Agency*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/09/us/politics/veterans-affairs-doge-cuts.html>.

⁹ *What’s at stake in DOGE’s CFPB shutdown*, AXIOS (Feb. 10, 2025), <https://www.axios.com/2025/02/10/doge-trump-cfpb-scammers>.

¹⁰ *Mass layoffs at USDA leave an uncertain future for researchers and rural areas*, NPR (Mar. 3, 2025), <https://www.kcur.org/2025-03-03/usda-mass-layoffs-researchers-uncertain-future>; *The USAID shutdown is upending livelihoods for nonprofit workers, farmers and other Americans*, ASSOC. PRESS (Feb. 18, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/trump-usaid-foreign-aid-shutdown-impact-fd4f9bb016f1acf7fb1c2fae7a5c32f5>.

¹¹ *7 Ways DOGE’s Government Cuts Could Impact Everyone*, WASHINGTONIAN (Feb. 24, 2025), <https://www.washingtonian.com/2025/02/24/7-ways-doges-government-cuts-could-impact-everyone/>.

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 - d. Which employees would be eligible for the Deferred Resignation Program; and
 - e. Which employees would be eligible for any other voluntary separation program you have offered.
5. Who—including but not limited to supervisors, executives, attorneys, political appointees, contractors, labor organizations, human resources specialists, and parties

outside your organization—was consulted or involved in the processes described in question 4? Please describe the role of each identified party.

6. What records or tools, including but not limited to software, electronic systems, databases, questionnaires or surveys, automation tools, algorithms, and artificial intelligence (AI) platforms, were involved in the processes described in question 4? Please name each platform or program and explain in detail the role each played in the decision-making process.
7. What procedural or due process rights were afforded to the employees identified in question 1.b.? Were the employees identified in question 1.b. issued a written notice of their separation? What notice, if any, was provided to employees regarding their right to appeal or dispute the action?
8. Please indicate by subagency those who have been or will be involved or consulted in the process of drafting the following items, and the role of each identified party:
 - a. Agency Reduction in Force and Reorganization Plans;
 - b. Recommendations and petitions for moving positions into Schedule Policy/Career; and
 - c. Recommendations and petitions for redesignation of Senior Executive Service positions.

In addition, please provide the Committee and the Subcommittee with the following records²⁵ by April 29, 2025, and on an ongoing basis every two (2) weeks thereafter:

9. Agency Contingency Plans submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) since 2019.
10. All records transmitted by your agency to OPM or by OPM to your agency on or after January 20, 2025, referring or relating to:
 - a. Retaining or separating probationary employees;
 - b. Placing employees on administrative leave;
 - c. Determining employee eligibility for the Deferred Resignation Program or any other voluntary separation programs that have been offered to employees;
 - d. Employee performance data;
 - e. Agency Reduction in Force and Reorganization Plans;
 - f. Moving positions into Schedule Policy/Career; and
 - g. Redesignating Senior Executive Service positions.

²⁵ “Records” include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (text messages, WhatsApp or Signal messages, emails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).

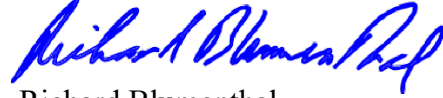
The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr.
April 15, 2025
Page 7

Please contact the Committee and the Subcommittee should you have any questions about responding to these requests. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Gary Peters
Ranking Member
Committee Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs



Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on
Investigations

cc: The Honorable Rand Paul
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

April 15, 2025

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Noem:

The Trump Administration’s politically-motivated campaign to decimate the federal workforce—recklessly driven by Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (“DOGE”)—has exacted devastating and lasting harm on the dedicated public servants who work for the American people, including your staff at the Department of Homeland Security. We write to request information and records to assist the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs’ (“HSGAC” or “the Committee”) and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations’ (“PSI” or “the Subcommittee”) understanding of how Mr. Musk’s unprecedented and dangerous push to politicize and destabilize our civil service has impacted your agency.

Efforts to intimidate and traumatize federal civil servants through mass firings, forced leave, email threats, loyalty pledges, and more not only severely undermine the federal workforce morale, retention, and institutional knowledge, but jeopardize the critical, often life-saving services these workers deliver to the American people every day. While purportedly in the name of increased efficiency, the chaos sown by Mr. Musk’s reckless, arbitrary edicts to the federal workforce will ultimately cost the federal government far more than any imagined savings—generating tremendous amounts of needless waste. As the steward of your agency, we urge you to take all appropriate action to ensure the integrity of the Department of Homeland Security, its workforce, and the services it performs for the American people.¹

The unjustified assault on the federal workforce has taken shape in numerous troubling ways. Mass firings, forced leave, and deferred resignations leave much smaller teams of remaining employees to shoulder impossible burdens. New and promoted probationary employees have been targeted and treated as disposable rather than as an investment in the future.² Thousands of public

¹ See, e.g., *Trump tells cabinet secretaries they, not Musk, are in charge of staff cuts*, REUTERS (Mar. 7, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-tells-cabinet-secretaries-they-not-musk-are-charge-staff-cuts-2025-03-06/>; *Inside the Explosive Meeting Where Trump Officials Clashed With Elon Musk*, NEW YORK TIMES (Mar. 13, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/07/us/politics/trump-musk-doge-power.html>.

² *OPM asks agencies to justify keeping probationary employees*, FEDERAL NEWS NETWORK (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/workforce/2025/02/opm-asks-agencies-to-justify-keeping-probationary-employees/>.

servants have been left in limbo, some stranded overseas, wondering if they still have a job.³ Others have been fired without regard to their critical functions, leaving agencies to scramble to re-hire them—such as those supervising our nuclear stockpile, tracking the spread of bird flu, and monitoring the safety of infant formula.⁴ Some employees were pressured to take buyout offers of up to \$25,000 under sudden and unreasonable deadlines.⁵ Still more have been beguiled by “deferred resignation” offers of dubious legality with shifting terms, enticing them with the promise of continued pay for no work, only to have the rug pulled from under them when they too are fired.⁶

The chaos imposed by the destructive Trump-Musk campaign to gut the federal workforce threatens the critical services that federal agencies provide to the American people. Firings at the Social Security Administration, for example, put payments to millions of beneficiaries in jeopardy.⁷ The Department of Veterans Affairs’ ability to care for our veterans and their families will be drastically undermined by unprecedented staffing reductions.⁸ The effective closure of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has removed thousands of federal workers whose jobs were to prevent American consumers from being targeted by financial scams.⁹ Indiscriminate staffing cuts at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Agency for International Development risk devastating impacts on farmers and rural communities.¹⁰ Layoffs at the Internal Revenue Service, Federal Housing Authority, and Department of Energy will make it easier for tax cheats to evade detection while driving up housing and energy costs for everyday taxpayers.¹¹ Moreover, mass firings and chaotic directives at the Federal Aviation Administration increase the risks of

³ *‘Thank you for your service’: Trump administration puts USAID staff on leave*, NPR (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/04/nx-s1-5287053/usaid-trump-overseas-withdrawal>; *‘We’re pawns in a game’: US aid workers left in limbo overseas as agency slashed*, BBC (Feb. 7, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cew5pen8edvo>.

⁴ *After mass layoffs, some federal agencies are trying to bring employees back*, NPR (Feb. 21, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/21/nx-s1-5304152/federal-government-layoffs-reversed>; *FDA moves to rehire medical device, food safety and other staffers fired days earlier*, ASSOC. PRESS (Feb. 24, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/fda-layoffs-trump-doge-rehired-medical-devices-85d4743e4ce88dbe3b99c813bad4b702>.

⁵ *Education Department to staffers: Quit by Monday and get \$25K in cash*, POLITICO (Feb. 28, 2025), <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/02/28/education-department-quit-00206765>; *HHS makes \$25,000 buyout offer to most of its workers as Trump administration continues cuts*, PBS (Mar. 9, 2025), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/hhs-makes-25000-buyout-offer-to-most-of-its-workers-as-trump-administration-continues-cuts>.

⁶ *These feds took Trump’s ‘fork’ deal. Then they got fired — creating a government ‘mess.’*, WASH. POST (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2025/02/20/fork-resignation-fired-anyway-trump-federal-workers/>.

⁷ *Social Security Employees Warn of Damage From DOGE*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 17, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/17/business/social-security-doge-ssa.html>.

⁸ *Chaos at the V.A.: Inside the DOGE Cuts Disrupting the Veterans Agency*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/09/us/politics/veterans-affairs-doge-cuts.html>.

⁹ *What’s at stake in DOGE’s CFPB shutdown*, AXIOS (Feb. 10, 2025), <https://www.axios.com/2025/02/10/doge-trump-cfpb-scammers>.

¹⁰ *Mass layoffs at USDA leave an uncertain future for researchers and rural areas*, NPR (Mar. 3, 2025), <https://www.kcur.org/2025-03-03/usda-mass-layoffs-researchers-uncertain-future>; *The USAID shutdown is upending livelihoods for nonprofit workers, farmers and other Americans*, ASSOC. PRESS (Feb. 18, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/trump-usaid-foreign-aid-shutdown-impact-fd4f9bb016f1acf7fb1c2fae7a5c32f5>.

¹¹ *7 Ways DOGE’s Government Cuts Could Impact Everyone*, WASHINGTONIAN (Feb. 24, 2025), <https://www.washingtonian.com/2025/02/24/7-ways-doges-government-cuts-could-impact-everyone/>.

dangerous aviation incidents.¹² As one former senior Federal Aviation Administration executive explained, “People die when FAA workers are distracted and processes are broken.”¹³

The disconnect between the Trump Administration’s stated objective of improving efficiency and the destructive actions Mr. Musk has put into motion is not only absurd but also incredibly costly and wasteful. The campaign against the federal workforce will cost taxpayers dearly, both directly and indirectly. For example, in the name of fighting waste and abuse, thousands of federal employees have been ordered to take administrative leave—meaning they are being paid with taxpayer dollars to do nothing.¹⁴ The investments previously made to train thousands of now fired probationary employees will have zero return, and may need to be repeated when DOGE once again discovers that fired workers held crucial roles. As one fired Internal Revenue Service probationary employee complained, “I’m appalled my tax dollars were wasted on getting all those employees trained, and they didn’t even get the chance to get out of their probationary period.”¹⁵ Moreover, federal employee layoffs will cost the federal government billions of dollars in unemployment benefits and wrongful termination claims.¹⁶ Greatly diminished staffs of agencies providing critical public services will increasingly turn to profit-driven, private government contractors, driving up the cost to taxpayers while corporations pocket the difference.¹⁷ Meanwhile, at the same time that Mr. Musk slashes government workers in the name of efficiency, he is seeking to double the staff at DOGE and compensate his handpicked allies with six-figure salaries.¹⁸ DOGE’s budget has ballooned to nearly \$40 million and is financed mostly by payments from other agencies for DOGE employees.¹⁹ In one instance, they

¹² *The FAA’s Troubles Are More Serious Than You Know*, THE ATLANTIC (Mar. 9, 2025), <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2025/03/faa-trump-elon-plane-crash/681975/>.

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Russell Vought closes CFPB HQ, tells staff to stop work*, NPR (Feb. 10, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/08/nx-s1-5290914/russell-vought-cfpb-doge-access-musk; 'Playing games': Reinstated federal workers furious they're being paid to do nothing>, BUSINESS INSIDER (Mar. 21, 2025), <https://www.businessinsider.com/reinstated-fired-federal-workers-got-job-back-getting-paid-2025-3>.

¹⁵ *Stalled Audits and a Skeleton Staff: Inside Trump’s War on the I.R.S.*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 13, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/10/us/politics/irs-taxes-trump-musk-federal-workers.html>.

¹⁶ *Trump layoffs could cost government billions in unemployment payouts*, WASH. EXAMINER (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/white-house/3325231/trump-mass-layoffs-cost-government-billions-unemployment-benefits/>; *Federal workers were fired 'for performance.' Their records say otherwise*, REUTERS (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/federal-workers-were-fired-for-performance-their-records-say-otherwise-2025-02-20/>; *Nearly 6,000 USDA workers fired by Trump ordered back to work for now*, NPR (Mar. 5, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/03/05/nx-s1-5318687/usda-fired-federal-employees-probationary-osc-mspb>.

¹⁷ *Elon Musk’s mass government cuts could make private companies millions*, THE GUARDIAN (Feb. 16, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/feb/16/elon-musk-doge-government-privatization>.

¹⁸ *Elon Musk goes behind-the-scenes at DOGE, unveils biggest source of fraud in the world*, FOX BUSINESS (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.foxbusiness.com/media/elon-musk-goes-behind-the-scenes-doge-unveils-biggest-source-fraud; DOGE wants to charge one federal agency millions of dollars for its work to make government more efficient>, CNN POLITICS (Mar. 3, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/03/politics/doge-wants-to-charge-opm-millions/index.html>.

¹⁹ *DOGE’s Millions: As Musk and Trump Gut Government, Their Ax-Cutting Agency Gets Cash Infusion*, PROPUBLICA (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.propublica.org/article/doge-trump-musk-funding-foia-congress-transparency>.

charged an agency for 20 DOGE employees, which could amount to a \$4 million bill at the taxpayer's expense.²⁰

Beyond the sizeable and immediate economic impact resulting from disruptions to government functions, the broader effort to politicize the civil service endangers its vital, nonpartisan work. Reports have emerged of Trump loyalty tests and questionnaires being used to weed out those not deemed sufficiently loyal to the President instead of the U.S. Constitution and the rule of law.²¹ The revised Schedule Policy/Career and redesignations aimed at senior managers seek to weaken competitive hiring, remove protections from partisan discrimination, and permit politics to seep into every layer of government.²² Such transformation will open a revolving door for political operatives while driving away true talent, reverting federal employment to the corrupt spoils system rejected by federal law more than a century ago, a system where money and favor are elevated over merit and competence.²³

The American people deserve better from their government. The public deserves to know how agency leaders have been implementing DOGE purges, how they intend to manage their nonpartisan workforce in the future, and indeed whether they are following the law and established agency rules and policies. For the reasons stated above and pursuant to the authority under Senate Rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate and Senate Resolution 94 (119th Cong.), Section 12, please provide information responsive to the following requests by April 29, 2025, and on an ongoing basis every two (2) weeks thereafter.

1. Please provide the following information for your agency, broken down by each subagency:
 - a. The total number of employees as of January 20, 2025.
 - b. The total number of employees on probationary status²⁴ as of January 20, 2025, including the number employees on probationary status due to new hire status, recent promotion, inter or intra-agency transfer, or any other reason.

²⁰ CNN POLITICS, *supra* note 18.

²¹ *U.S. intelligence, law enforcement candidates face Trump loyalty test*, WASH. POST (Feb. 9, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/02/08/trump-administration-job-candidates-loyalty-screening/>; *Loyalty tests and MAGA checks: Inside the Trump White House's intense screening of job-seekers*, ASSOC. PRESS (Jan. 25, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/trump-loyalty-white-house-maga-vetting-jobs-768fa5cbcf175652655c86203222f47c>; *FBI advocates appeal to Congress as agents face scrutiny for Jan 6 work*, REUTERS (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/fbi-advocates-appeal-congress-agents-face-scrutiny-jan-6-work-2025-02-03/>.

²² *See Restoring Accountability To Policy-Influencing Positions Within the Federal Workforce*, THE WHITE HOUSE (Jan. 20, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/restoring-accountability-to-policy-influencing-positions-within-the-federal-workforce/>; U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Memorandum: Guidance Regarding Redesignating SES CIO Positions, (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.chcoc.gov/content/guidance-regarding-redesignating-ses-cio-positions>; U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Memorandum: Maintaining the Integrity of the Career Senior Executive Service, (Feb. 5, 2025), <https://www.chcoc.gov/content/maintaining-integrity-career-senior-executive-service>.

²³ *DOGE and the 'arson of a public asset'*, CNN POLITICS (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/10/politics/doge-federal-government-cuts>.

²⁴ For the purpose of this request, "probationary status" is to include probationary and trial periods.

- c. The number of separations processed since January 20, 2025, by the type of separation (e.g. the nature of action and legal authority code) and probationary status.
 - d. The number of employees who accepted the Deferred Resignation Program.
 - e. The number of requests under the Deferred Resignation Program that were denied by the agency including reasons why each request was denied.
 - f. The number of employees who accepted any other voluntary separation program you may have offered. Please specify the program (e.g., VISP or VERA) and total cost of these offers to date.
 - g. The number of employees who have been placed on administrative leave since January 20, 2025. Please specify the reasons and statutory or regulatory basis for each employee placed on administrative leave, including whether the employee was placed on administrative leave involuntarily, including the reason for using administrative leave voluntarily or involuntarily.
2. Please provide the following cost information associated with employees your agency has separated since January 20, 2025:
 - a. The total cost of salary and benefits (accrued or estimated) for all employees who accepted the Deferred Resignation Program and whose acceptances were not denied by the agency.
 - b. The total cost of any severance, buyout, or other lump sum payment offered through any program (e.g. VISP or VERA) since January 20, 2025.
 - c. The total cost of salary and benefits for any employees placed on administrative leave involuntarily for the duration of any period of administrative leave.
 - d. The total cost of training and onboarding conducted within the past two years for all probationary employees terminated since January 20, 2025.
 - e. The total cost of training for any current employees or contractors utilized by the agency to replace employees who have a) been separated from the agency through involuntary termination other than for cause, b) accepted the Deferred Resignation Program or other voluntary termination offer, or c) been involuntarily placed on administrative leave.
3. Since January 20, 2025, have you reinstated or reemployed any employees after their separation? If any, please provide the number of affected employees, the reason(s) for the separations, and the reason(s) for reinstatement or reemployment.
4. Please identify and explain in detail each factor considered in determining:
 - a. Which probationary employees to retain or separate;
 - b. Which employees to reinstate or reemploy following a separation;
 - c. Which employees to place on administrative leave;
 - d. Which employees would be eligible for the Deferred Resignation Program; and
 - e. Which employees would be eligible for any other voluntary separation program you have offered.
5. Who—including but not limited to supervisors, executives, attorneys, political appointees, contractors, labor organizations, human resources specialists, and parties

outside your organization—was consulted or involved in the processes described in question 4? Please describe the role of each identified party.

6. What records or tools, including but not limited to software, electronic systems, databases, questionnaires or surveys, automation tools, algorithms, and artificial intelligence (AI) platforms, were involved in the processes described in question 4? Please name each platform or program and explain in detail the role each played in the decision-making process.
7. What procedural or due process rights were afforded to the employees identified in question 1.b.? Were the employees identified in question 1.b. issued a written notice of their separation? What notice, if any, was provided to employees regarding their right to appeal or dispute the action?
8. Please indicate by subagency those who have been or will be involved or consulted in the process of drafting the following items, and the role of each identified party:
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In addition, please provide the Committee and the Subcommittee with the following records²⁵ by April 29, 2025, and on an ongoing basis every two (2) weeks thereafter:

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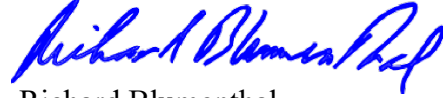
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Please contact the Committee and the Subcommittee should you have any questions about responding to these requests. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Gary Peters
Ranking Member
Committee Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs



Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on
Investigations

cc: The Honorable Rand Paul
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

April 15, 2025

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Scott Turner
Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20410

Dear Secretary Turner:

The Trump Administration’s politically-motivated campaign to decimate the federal workforce—recklessly driven by Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (“DOGE”)—has exacted devastating and lasting harm on the dedicated public servants who work for the American people, including your staff at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. We write to request information and records to assist the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs’ (“HSGAC” or “the Committee”) and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations’ (“PSI” or “the Subcommittee”) understanding of how Mr. Musk’s unprecedented and dangerous push to politicize and destabilize our civil service has impacted your agency.

Efforts to intimidate and traumatize federal civil servants through mass firings, forced leave, email threats, loyalty pledges, and more not only severely undermine the federal workforce morale, retention, and institutional knowledge, but jeopardize the critical, often life-saving services these workers deliver to the American people every day. While purportedly in the name of increased efficiency, the chaos sown by Mr. Musk’s reckless, arbitrary edicts to the federal workforce will ultimately cost the federal government far more than any imagined savings—generating tremendous amounts of needless waste. As the steward of your agency, we urge you to take all appropriate action to ensure the integrity of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, its workforce, and the services it performs for the American people.¹

The unjustified assault on the federal workforce has taken shape in numerous troubling ways. Mass firings, forced leave, and deferred resignations leave much smaller teams of remaining employees to shoulder impossible burdens. New and promoted probationary employees have been targeted and treated as disposable rather than as an investment in the future.² Thousands of public

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² *OPM asks agencies to justify keeping probationary employees*, FEDERAL NEWS NETWORK (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/workforce/2025/02/opm-asks-agencies-to-justify-keeping-probationary-employees/>.

servants have been left in limbo, some stranded overseas, wondering if they still have a job.³ Others have been fired without regard to their critical functions, leaving agencies to scramble to re-hire them—such as those supervising our nuclear stockpile, tracking the spread of bird flu, and monitoring the safety of infant formula.⁴ Some employees were pressured to take buyout offers of up to \$25,000 under sudden and unreasonable deadlines.⁵ Still more have been beguiled by “deferred resignation” offers of dubious legality with shifting terms, enticing them with the promise of continued pay for no work, only to have the rug pulled from under them when they too are fired.⁶

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⁴ *After mass layoffs, some federal agencies are trying to bring employees back*, NPR (Feb. 21, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/21/nx-s1-5304152/federal-government-layoffs-reversed>; *FDA moves to rehire medical device, food safety and other staffers fired days earlier*, ASSOC. PRESS (Feb. 24, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/fda-layoffs-trump-doge-rehired-medical-devices-85d4743e4ce88dbe3b99c813bad4b702>.

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⁷ *Social Security Employees Warn of Damage From DOGE*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 17, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/17/business/social-security-doge-ssa.html>.

⁸ *Chaos at the V.A.: Inside the DOGE Cuts Disrupting the Veterans Agency*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/09/us/politics/veterans-affairs-doge-cuts.html>.

⁹ *What’s at stake in DOGE’s CFPB shutdown*, AXIOS (Feb. 10, 2025), <https://www.axios.com/2025/02/10/doge-trump-cfpb-scammers>.

¹⁰ *Mass layoffs at USDA leave an uncertain future for researchers and rural areas*, NPR (Mar. 3, 2025), <https://www.kcur.org/2025-03-03/usda-mass-layoffs-researchers-uncertain-future>; *The USAID shutdown is upending livelihoods for nonprofit workers, farmers and other Americans*, ASSOC. PRESS (Feb. 18, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/trump-usaid-foreign-aid-shutdown-impact-fd4f9bb016f1acf7fb1c2fae7a5c32f5>.

¹¹ *7 Ways DOGE’s Government Cuts Could Impact Everyone*, WASHINGTONIAN (Feb. 24, 2025), <https://www.washingtonian.com/2025/02/24/7-ways-doges-government-cuts-could-impact-everyone/>.

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The disconnect between the Trump Administration’s stated objective of improving efficiency and the destructive actions Mr. Musk has put into motion is not only absurd but also incredibly costly and wasteful. The campaign against the federal workforce will cost taxpayers dearly, both directly and indirectly. For example, in the name of fighting waste and abuse, thousands of federal employees have been ordered to take administrative leave—meaning they are being paid with taxpayer dollars to do nothing.¹⁴ The investments previously made to train thousands of now fired probationary employees will have zero return, and may need to be repeated when DOGE once again discovers that fired workers held crucial roles. As one fired Internal Revenue Service probationary employee complained, “I’m appalled my tax dollars were wasted on getting all those employees trained, and they didn’t even get the chance to get out of their probationary period.”¹⁵ Moreover, federal employee layoffs will cost the federal government billions of dollars in unemployment benefits and wrongful termination claims.¹⁶ Greatly diminished staffs of agencies providing critical public services will increasingly turn to profit-driven, private government contractors, driving up the cost to taxpayers while corporations pocket the difference.¹⁷ Meanwhile, at the same time that Mr. Musk slashes government workers in the name of efficiency, he is seeking to double the staff at DOGE and compensate his handpicked allies with six-figure salaries.¹⁸ DOGE’s budget has ballooned to nearly \$40 million and is financed mostly by payments from other agencies for DOGE employees.¹⁹ In one instance, they

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¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Russell Vought closes CFPB HQ, tells staff to stop work*, NPR (Feb. 10, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/08/nx-s1-5290914/russell-vought-cfpb-doge-access-musk; 'Playing games': Reinstated federal workers furious they're being paid to do nothing>, BUSINESS INSIDER (Mar. 21, 2025), <https://www.businessinsider.com/reinstated-fired-federal-workers-got-job-back-getting-paid-2025-3>.

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The American people deserve better from their government. The public deserves to know how agency leaders have been implementing DOGE purges, how they intend to manage their nonpartisan workforce in the future, and indeed whether they are following the law and established agency rules and policies. For the reasons stated above and pursuant to the authority under Senate Rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate and Senate Resolution 94 (119th Cong.), Section 12, please provide information responsive to the following requests by April 29, 2025, and on an ongoing basis every two (2) weeks thereafter.

1. Please provide the following information for your agency, broken down by each subagency:
 - a. The total number of employees as of January 20, 2025.
 - b. The total number of employees on probationary status²⁴ as of January 20, 2025, including the number employees on probationary status due to new hire status, recent promotion, inter or intra-agency transfer, or any other reason.

²⁰ CNN POLITICS, *supra* note 18.

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²³ *DOGE and the 'arson of a public asset'*, CNN POLITICS (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/10/politics/doge-federal-government-cuts>.

²⁴ For the purpose of this request, "probationary status" is to include probationary and trial periods.

- c. The number of separations processed since January 20, 2025, by the type of separation (e.g. the nature of action and legal authority code) and probationary status.
 - d. The number of employees who accepted the Deferred Resignation Program.
 - e. The number of requests under the Deferred Resignation Program that were denied by the agency including reasons why each request was denied.
 - f. The number of employees who accepted any other voluntary separation program you may have offered. Please specify the program (e.g., VISP or VERA) and total cost of these offers to date.
 - g. The number of employees who have been placed on administrative leave since January 20, 2025. Please specify the reasons and statutory or regulatory basis for each employee placed on administrative leave, including whether the employee was placed on administrative leave involuntarily, including the reason for using administrative leave voluntarily or involuntarily.
2. Please provide the following cost information associated with employees your agency has separated since January 20, 2025:
 - a. The total cost of salary and benefits (accrued or estimated) for all employees who accepted the Deferred Resignation Program and whose acceptances were not denied by the agency.
 - b. The total cost of any severance, buyout, or other lump sum payment offered through any program (e.g. VISP or VERA) since January 20, 2025.
 - c. The total cost of salary and benefits for any employees placed on administrative leave involuntarily for the duration of any period of administrative leave.
 - d. The total cost of training and onboarding conducted within the past two years for all probationary employees terminated since January 20, 2025.
 - e. The total cost of training for any current employees or contractors utilized by the agency to replace employees who have a) been separated from the agency through involuntary termination other than for cause, b) accepted the Deferred Resignation Program or other voluntary termination offer, or c) been involuntarily placed on administrative leave.
3. Since January 20, 2025, have you reinstated or reemployed any employees after their separation? If any, please provide the number of affected employees, the reason(s) for the separations, and the reason(s) for reinstatement or reemployment.
4. Please identify and explain in detail each factor considered in determining:
 - a. Which probationary employees to retain or separate;
 - b. Which employees to reinstate or reemploy following a separation;
 - c. Which employees to place on administrative leave;
 - d. Which employees would be eligible for the Deferred Resignation Program; and
 - e. Which employees would be eligible for any other voluntary separation program you have offered.
5. Who—including but not limited to supervisors, executives, attorneys, political appointees, contractors, labor organizations, human resources specialists, and parties

outside your organization—was consulted or involved in the processes described in question 4? Please describe the role of each identified party.

6. What records or tools, including but not limited to software, electronic systems, databases, questionnaires or surveys, automation tools, algorithms, and artificial intelligence (AI) platforms, were involved in the processes described in question 4? Please name each platform or program and explain in detail the role each played in the decision-making process.
7. What procedural or due process rights were afforded to the employees identified in question 1.b.? Were the employees identified in question 1.b. issued a written notice of their separation? What notice, if any, was provided to employees regarding their right to appeal or dispute the action?
8. Please indicate by subagency those who have been or will be involved or consulted in the process of drafting the following items, and the role of each identified party:
 - a. Agency Reduction in Force and Reorganization Plans;
 - b. Recommendations and petitions for moving positions into Schedule Policy/Career; and
 - c. Recommendations and petitions for redesignation of Senior Executive Service positions.

In addition, please provide the Committee and the Subcommittee with the following records²⁵ by April 29, 2025, and on an ongoing basis every two (2) weeks thereafter:

9. Agency Contingency Plans submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) since 2019.
10. All records transmitted by your agency to OPM or by OPM to your agency on or after January 20, 2025, referring or relating to:
 - a. Retaining or separating probationary employees;
 - b. Placing employees on administrative leave;
 - c. Determining employee eligibility for the Deferred Resignation Program or any other voluntary separation programs that have been offered to employees;
 - d. Employee performance data;
 - e. Agency Reduction in Force and Reorganization Plans;
 - f. Moving positions into Schedule Policy/Career; and
 - g. Redesignating Senior Executive Service positions.

²⁵ “Records” include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (text messages, WhatsApp or Signal messages, emails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).

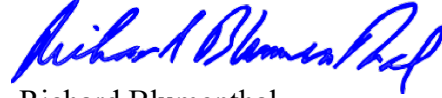
The Honorable Scott Turner
April 15, 2025
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Please contact the Committee and the Subcommittee should you have any questions about responding to these requests. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Gary Peters
Ranking Member
Committee Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs



Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on
Investigations

cc: The Honorable Rand Paul
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

April 15, 2025

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Pamela Bondi
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Attorney General Bondi:

The Trump Administration’s politically-motivated campaign to decimate the federal workforce—recklessly driven by Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (“DOGE”)—has exacted devastating and lasting harm on the dedicated public servants who work for the American people, including your staff at the Department of Justice. We write to request information and records to assist the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs’ (“HSGAC” or “the Committee”) and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations’ (“PSI” or “the Subcommittee”) understanding of how Mr. Musk’s unprecedented and dangerous push to politicize and destabilize our civil service has impacted your agency.

Efforts to intimidate and traumatize federal civil servants through mass firings, forced leave, email threats, loyalty pledges, and more not only severely undermine the federal workforce morale, retention, and institutional knowledge, but jeopardize the critical, often life-saving services these workers deliver to the American people every day. While purportedly in the name of increased efficiency, the chaos sown by Mr. Musk’s reckless, arbitrary edicts to the federal workforce will ultimately cost the federal government far more than any imagined savings—generating tremendous amounts of needless waste. As the steward of your agency, we urge you to take all appropriate action to ensure the integrity of the Department of Justice, its workforce, and the services it performs for the American people.¹

The unjustified assault on the federal workforce has taken shape in numerous troubling ways. Mass firings, forced leave, and deferred resignations leave much smaller teams of remaining employees to shoulder impossible burdens. New and promoted probationary employees have been targeted and treated as disposable rather than as an investment in the future.² Thousands of public

¹ See, e.g., *Trump tells cabinet secretaries they, not Musk, are in charge of staff cuts*, REUTERS (Mar. 7, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-tells-cabinet-secretaries-they-not-musk-are-charge-staff-cuts-2025-03-06/>; *Inside the Explosive Meeting Where Trump Officials Clashed With Elon Musk*, NEW YORK TIMES (Mar. 13, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/07/us/politics/trump-musk-doge-power.html>.

² *OPM asks agencies to justify keeping probationary employees*, FEDERAL NEWS NETWORK (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/workforce/2025/02/opm-asks-agencies-to-justify-keeping-probationary-employees/>.

servants have been left in limbo, some stranded overseas, wondering if they still have a job.³ Others have been fired without regard to their critical functions, leaving agencies to scramble to re-hire them—such as those supervising our nuclear stockpile, tracking the spread of bird flu, and monitoring the safety of infant formula.⁴ Some employees were pressured to take buyout offers of up to \$25,000 under sudden and unreasonable deadlines.⁵ Still more have been beguiled by “deferred resignation” offers of dubious legality with shifting terms, enticing them with the promise of continued pay for no work, only to have the rug pulled from under them when they too are fired.⁶

The chaos imposed by the destructive Trump-Musk campaign to gut the federal workforce threatens the critical services that federal agencies provide to the American people. Firings at the Social Security Administration, for example, put payments to millions of beneficiaries in jeopardy.⁷ The Department of Veterans Affairs’ ability to care for our veterans and their families will be drastically undermined by unprecedented staffing reductions.⁸ The effective closure of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has removed thousands of federal workers whose jobs were to prevent American consumers from being targeted by financial scams.⁹ Indiscriminate staffing cuts at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Agency for International Development risk devastating impacts on farmers and rural communities.¹⁰ Layoffs at the Internal Revenue Service, Federal Housing Authority, and Department of Energy will make it easier for tax cheats to evade detection while driving up housing and energy costs for everyday taxpayers.¹¹ Moreover, mass firings and chaotic directives at the Federal Aviation Administration increase the risks of

³ *‘Thank you for your service’: Trump administration puts USAID staff on leave*, NPR (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/04/nx-s1-5287053/usaid-trump-overseas-withdrawal>; *‘We’re pawns in a game’: US aid workers left in limbo overseas as agency slashed*, BBC (Feb. 7, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cew5pen8edvo>.

⁴ *After mass layoffs, some federal agencies are trying to bring employees back*, NPR (Feb. 21, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/21/nx-s1-5304152/federal-government-layoffs-reversed>; *FDA moves to rehire medical device, food safety and other staffers fired days earlier*, ASSOC. PRESS (Feb. 24, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/fda-layoffs-trump-doge-rehired-medical-devices-85d4743e4ce88dbe3b99c813bad4b702>.

⁵ *Education Department to staffers: Quit by Monday and get \$25K in cash*, POLITICO (Feb. 28, 2025), <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/02/28/education-department-quit-00206765>; *HHS makes \$25,000 buyout offer to most of its workers as Trump administration continues cuts*, PBS (Mar. 9, 2025), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/hhs-makes-25000-buyout-offer-to-most-of-its-workers-as-trump-administration-continues-cuts>.

⁶ *These feds took Trump’s ‘fork’ deal. Then they got fired — creating a government ‘mess.’*, WASH. POST (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2025/02/20/fork-resignation-fired-anyway-trump-federal-workers/>.

⁷ *Social Security Employees Warn of Damage From DOGE*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 17, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/17/business/social-security-doge-ssa.html>.

⁸ *Chaos at the V.A.: Inside the DOGE Cuts Disrupting the Veterans Agency*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/09/us/politics/veterans-affairs-doge-cuts.html>.

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 - g. The number of employees who have been placed on administrative leave since January 20, 2025. Please specify the reasons and statutory or regulatory basis for each employee placed on administrative leave, including whether the employee was placed on administrative leave involuntarily, including the reason for using administrative leave voluntarily or involuntarily.
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 - a. The total cost of salary and benefits (accrued or estimated) for all employees who accepted the Deferred Resignation Program and whose acceptances were not denied by the agency.
 - b. The total cost of any severance, buyout, or other lump sum payment offered through any program (e.g. VISP or VERA) since January 20, 2025.
 - c. The total cost of salary and benefits for any employees placed on administrative leave involuntarily for the duration of any period of administrative leave.
 - d. The total cost of training and onboarding conducted within the past two years for all probationary employees terminated since January 20, 2025.
 - e. The total cost of training for any current employees or contractors utilized by the agency to replace employees who have a) been separated from the agency through involuntary termination other than for cause, b) accepted the Deferred Resignation Program or other voluntary termination offer, or c) been involuntarily placed on administrative leave.
3. Since January 20, 2025, have you reinstated or reemployed any employees after their separation? If any, please provide the number of affected employees, the reason(s) for the separations, and the reason(s) for reinstatement or reemployment.
4. Please identify and explain in detail each factor considered in determining:
 - a. Which probationary employees to retain or separate;
 - b. Which employees to reinstate or reemploy following a separation;
 - c. Which employees to place on administrative leave;
 - d. Which employees would be eligible for the Deferred Resignation Program; and
 - e. Which employees would be eligible for any other voluntary separation program you have offered.
5. Who—including but not limited to supervisors, executives, attorneys, political appointees, contractors, labor organizations, human resources specialists, and parties

outside your organization—was consulted or involved in the processes described in question 4? Please describe the role of each identified party.

6. What records or tools, including but not limited to software, electronic systems, databases, questionnaires or surveys, automation tools, algorithms, and artificial intelligence (AI) platforms, were involved in the processes described in question 4? Please name each platform or program and explain in detail the role each played in the decision-making process.
7. What procedural or due process rights were afforded to the employees identified in question 1.b.? Were the employees identified in question 1.b. issued a written notice of their separation? What notice, if any, was provided to employees regarding their right to appeal or dispute the action?
8. Please indicate by subagency those who have been or will be involved or consulted in the process of drafting the following items, and the role of each identified party:
 - a. Agency Reduction in Force and Reorganization Plans;
 - b. Recommendations and petitions for moving positions into Schedule Policy/Career; and
 - c. Recommendations and petitions for redesignation of Senior Executive Service positions.

In addition, please provide the Committee and the Subcommittee with the following records²⁵ by April 29, 2025, and on an ongoing basis every two (2) weeks thereafter:

9. Agency Contingency Plans submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) since 2019.
10. All records transmitted by your agency to OPM or by OPM to your agency on or after January 20, 2025, referring or relating to:
 - a. Retaining or separating probationary employees;
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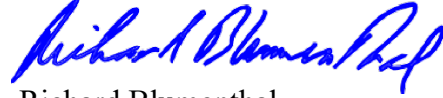
²⁵ “Records” include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (text messages, WhatsApp or Signal messages, emails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).

Please contact the Committee and the Subcommittee should you have any questions about responding to these requests. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Gary Peters
Ranking Member
Committee Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs



Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on
Investigations

cc: The Honorable Rand Paul
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

April 15, 2025

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Lori Chavez-DeRemer
Secretary of Labor
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Secretary Chavez-DeRemer:

The Trump Administration’s politically-motivated campaign to decimate the federal workforce—recklessly driven by Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (“DOGE”)—has exacted devastating and lasting harm on the dedicated public servants who work for the American people, including your staff at the Department of Labor. We write to request information and records to assist the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs’ (“HSGAC” or “the Committee”) and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations’ (“PSI” or “the Subcommittee”) understanding of how Mr. Musk’s unprecedented and dangerous push to politicize and destabilize our civil service has impacted your agency.

Efforts to intimidate and traumatize federal civil servants through mass firings, forced leave, email threats, loyalty pledges, and more not only severely undermine the federal workforce morale, retention, and institutional knowledge, but jeopardize the critical, often life-saving services these workers deliver to the American people every day. While purportedly in the name of increased efficiency, the chaos sown by Mr. Musk’s reckless, arbitrary edicts to the federal workforce will ultimately cost the federal government far more than any imagined savings—generating tremendous amounts of needless waste. As the steward of your agency, we urge you to take all appropriate action to ensure the integrity of the Department of Labor, its workforce, and the services it performs for the American people.¹

The unjustified assault on the federal workforce has taken shape in numerous troubling ways. Mass firings, forced leave, and deferred resignations leave much smaller teams of remaining employees to shoulder impossible burdens. New and promoted probationary employees have been targeted and treated as disposable rather than as an investment in the future.² Thousands of public

¹ See, e.g., *Trump tells cabinet secretaries they, not Musk, are in charge of staff cuts*, REUTERS (Mar. 7, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-tells-cabinet-secretaries-they-not-musk-are-charge-staff-cuts-2025-03-06/>; *Inside the Explosive Meeting Where Trump Officials Clashed With Elon Musk*, NEW YORK TIMES (Mar. 13, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/07/us/politics/trump-musk-doge-power.html>.

² *OPM asks agencies to justify keeping probationary employees*, FEDERAL NEWS NETWORK (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/workforce/2025/02/opm-asks-agencies-to-justify-keeping-probationary-employees/>.

servants have been left in limbo, some stranded overseas, wondering if they still have a job.³ Others have been fired without regard to their critical functions, leaving agencies to scramble to re-hire them—such as those supervising our nuclear stockpile, tracking the spread of bird flu, and monitoring the safety of infant formula.⁴ Some employees were pressured to take buyout offers of up to \$25,000 under sudden and unreasonable deadlines.⁵ Still more have been beguiled by “deferred resignation” offers of dubious legality with shifting terms, enticing them with the promise of continued pay for no work, only to have the rug pulled from under them when they too are fired.⁶

The chaos imposed by the destructive Trump-Musk campaign to gut the federal workforce threatens the critical services that federal agencies provide to the American people. Firings at the Social Security Administration, for example, put payments to millions of beneficiaries in jeopardy.⁷ The Department of Veterans Affairs’ ability to care for our veterans and their families will be drastically undermined by unprecedented staffing reductions.⁸ The effective closure of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has removed thousands of federal workers whose jobs were to prevent American consumers from being targeted by financial scams.⁹ Indiscriminate staffing cuts at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Agency for International Development risk devastating impacts on farmers and rural communities.¹⁰ Layoffs at the Internal Revenue Service, Federal Housing Authority, and Department of Energy will make it easier for tax cheats to evade detection while driving up housing and energy costs for everyday taxpayers.¹¹ Moreover, mass firings and chaotic directives at the Federal Aviation Administration increase the risks of

³ *‘Thank you for your service’: Trump administration puts USAID staff on leave*, NPR (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/04/nx-s1-5287053/usaid-trump-overseas-withdrawal>; *‘We’re pawns in a game’: US aid workers left in limbo overseas as agency slashed*, BBC (Feb. 7, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cew5pen8edvo>.

⁴ *After mass layoffs, some federal agencies are trying to bring employees back*, NPR (Feb. 21, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/21/nx-s1-5304152/federal-government-layoffs-reversed>; *FDA moves to rehire medical device, food safety and other staffers fired days earlier*, ASSOC. PRESS (Feb. 24, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/fda-layoffs-trump-doge-rehired-medical-devices-85d4743e4ce88dbe3b99c813bad4b702>.

⁵ *Education Department to staffers: Quit by Monday and get \$25K in cash*, POLITICO (Feb. 28, 2025), <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/02/28/education-department-quit-00206765>; *HHS makes \$25,000 buyout offer to most of its workers as Trump administration continues cuts*, PBS (Mar. 9, 2025), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/hhs-makes-25000-buyout-offer-to-most-of-its-workers-as-trump-administration-continues-cuts>.

⁶ *These feds took Trump’s ‘fork’ deal. Then they got fired — creating a government ‘mess.’*, WASH. POST (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2025/02/20/fork-resignation-fired-anyway-trump-federal-workers/>.

⁷ *Social Security Employees Warn of Damage From DOGE*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 17, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/17/business/social-security-doge-ssa.html>.

⁸ *Chaos at the V.A.: Inside the DOGE Cuts Disrupting the Veterans Agency*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/09/us/politics/veterans-affairs-doge-cuts.html>.

⁹ *What’s at stake in DOGE’s CFPB shutdown*, AXIOS (Feb. 10, 2025), <https://www.axios.com/2025/02/10/doge-trump-cfpb-scammers>.

¹⁰ *Mass layoffs at USDA leave an uncertain future for researchers and rural areas*, NPR (Mar. 3, 2025), <https://www.kcur.org/2025-03-03/usda-mass-layoffs-researchers-uncertain-future>; *The USAID shutdown is upending livelihoods for nonprofit workers, farmers and other Americans*, ASSOC. PRESS (Feb. 18, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/trump-usaid-foreign-aid-shutdown-impact-fd4f9bb016f1acf7fb1c2fae7a5c32f5>.

¹¹ *7 Ways DOGE’s Government Cuts Could Impact Everyone*, WASHINGTONIAN (Feb. 24, 2025), <https://www.washingtonian.com/2025/02/24/7-ways-doges-government-cuts-could-impact-everyone/>.

dangerous aviation incidents.¹² As one former senior Federal Aviation Administration executive explained, “People die when FAA workers are distracted and processes are broken.”¹³

The disconnect between the Trump Administration’s stated objective of improving efficiency and the destructive actions Mr. Musk has put into motion is not only absurd but also incredibly costly and wasteful. The campaign against the federal workforce will cost taxpayers dearly, both directly and indirectly. For example, in the name of fighting waste and abuse, thousands of federal employees have been ordered to take administrative leave—meaning they are being paid with taxpayer dollars to do nothing.¹⁴ The investments previously made to train thousands of now fired probationary employees will have zero return, and may need to be repeated when DOGE once again discovers that fired workers held crucial roles. As one fired Internal Revenue Service probationary employee complained, “I’m appalled my tax dollars were wasted on getting all those employees trained, and they didn’t even get the chance to get out of their probationary period.”¹⁵ Moreover, federal employee layoffs will cost the federal government billions of dollars in unemployment benefits and wrongful termination claims.¹⁶ Greatly diminished staffs of agencies providing critical public services will increasingly turn to profit-driven, private government contractors, driving up the cost to taxpayers while corporations pocket the difference.¹⁷ Meanwhile, at the same time that Mr. Musk slashes government workers in the name of efficiency, he is seeking to double the staff at DOGE and compensate his handpicked allies with six-figure salaries.¹⁸ DOGE’s budget has ballooned to nearly \$40 million and is financed mostly by payments from other agencies for DOGE employees.¹⁹ In one instance, they

¹² *The FAA’s Troubles Are More Serious Than You Know*, THE ATLANTIC (Mar. 9, 2025), <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2025/03/faa-trump-elon-plane-crash/681975/>.

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Russell Vought closes CFPB HQ, tells staff to stop work*, NPR (Feb. 10, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/08/nx-s1-5290914/russell-vought-cfpb-doge-access-musk; 'Playing games': Reinstated federal workers furious they're being paid to do nothing>, BUSINESS INSIDER (Mar. 21, 2025), <https://www.businessinsider.com/reinstated-fired-federal-workers-got-job-back-getting-paid-2025-3>.

¹⁵ *Stalled Audits and a Skeleton Staff: Inside Trump’s War on the I.R.S.*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 13, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/10/us/politics/irs-taxes-trump-musk-federal-workers.html>.

¹⁶ *Trump layoffs could cost government billions in unemployment payouts*, WASH. EXAMINER (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/white-house/3325231/trump-mass-layoffs-cost-government-billions-unemployment-benefits/>; *Federal workers were fired 'for performance.' Their records say otherwise*, REUTERS (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/federal-workers-were-fired-for-performance-their-records-say-otherwise-2025-02-20/>; *Nearly 6,000 USDA workers fired by Trump ordered back to work for now*, NPR (Mar. 5, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/03/05/nx-s1-5318687/usda-fired-federal-employees-probationary-osc-mspb>.

¹⁷ *Elon Musk’s mass government cuts could make private companies millions*, THE GUARDIAN (Feb. 16, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/feb/16/elon-musk-doge-government-privatization>.

¹⁸ *Elon Musk goes behind-the-scenes at DOGE, unveils biggest source of fraud in the world*, FOX BUSINESS (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.foxbusiness.com/media/elon-musk-goes-behind-the-scenes-doge-unveils-biggest-source-fraud; DOGE wants to charge one federal agency millions of dollars for its work to make government more efficient>, CNN POLITICS (Mar. 3, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/03/politics/doge-wants-to-charge-opm-millions/index.html>.

¹⁹ *DOGE’s Millions: As Musk and Trump Gut Government, Their Ax-Cutting Agency Gets Cash Infusion*, PROPUBLICA (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.propublica.org/article/doge-trump-musk-funding-foia-congress-transparency>.

charged an agency for 20 DOGE employees, which could amount to a \$4 million bill at the taxpayer's expense.²⁰

Beyond the sizeable and immediate economic impact resulting from disruptions to government functions, the broader effort to politicize the civil service endangers its vital, nonpartisan work. Reports have emerged of Trump loyalty tests and questionnaires being used to weed out those not deemed sufficiently loyal to the President instead of the U.S. Constitution and the rule of law.²¹ The revised Schedule Policy/Career and redesignations aimed at senior managers seek to weaken competitive hiring, remove protections from partisan discrimination, and permit politics to seep into every layer of government.²² Such transformation will open a revolving door for political operatives while driving away true talent, reverting federal employment to the corrupt spoils system rejected by federal law more than a century ago, a system where money and favor are elevated over merit and competence.²³

The American people deserve better from their government. The public deserves to know how agency leaders have been implementing DOGE purges, how they intend to manage their nonpartisan workforce in the future, and indeed whether they are following the law and established agency rules and policies. For the reasons stated above and pursuant to the authority under Senate Rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate and Senate Resolution 94 (119th Cong.), Section 12, please provide information responsive to the following requests by April 29, 2025, and on an ongoing basis every two (2) weeks thereafter.

1. Please provide the following information for your agency, broken down by each subagency:
 - a. The total number of employees as of January 20, 2025.
 - b. The total number of employees on probationary status²⁴ as of January 20, 2025, including the number employees on probationary status due to new hire status, recent promotion, inter or intra-agency transfer, or any other reason.

²⁰ CNN POLITICS, *supra* note 18.

²¹ *U.S. intelligence, law enforcement candidates face Trump loyalty test*, WASH. POST (Feb. 9, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/02/08/trump-administration-job-candidates-loyalty-screening/>; *Loyalty tests and MAGA checks: Inside the Trump White House's intense screening of job-seekers*, ASSOC. PRESS (Jan. 25, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/trump-loyalty-white-house-maga-vetting-jobs-768fa5cbcf175652655c86203222f47c>; *FBI advocates appeal to Congress as agents face scrutiny for Jan 6 work*, REUTERS (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/fbi-advocates-appeal-congress-agents-face-scrutiny-jan-6-work-2025-02-03/>.

²² *See Restoring Accountability To Policy-Influencing Positions Within the Federal Workforce*, THE WHITE HOUSE (Jan. 20, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/restoring-accountability-to-policy-influencing-positions-within-the-federal-workforce/>; U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Memorandum: Guidance Regarding Redesignating SES CIO Positions, (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.chcoc.gov/content/guidance-regarding-redesignating-ses-cio-positions>; U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Memorandum: Maintaining the Integrity of the Career Senior Executive Service, (Feb. 5, 2025), <https://www.chcoc.gov/content/maintaining-integrity-career-senior-executive-service>.

²³ *DOGE and the 'arson of a public asset'*, CNN POLITICS (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/10/politics/doge-federal-government-cuts>.

²⁴ For the purpose of this request, "probationary status" is to include probationary and trial periods.

- c. The number of separations processed since January 20, 2025, by the type of separation (e.g. the nature of action and legal authority code) and probationary status.
 - d. The number of employees who accepted the Deferred Resignation Program.
 - e. The number of requests under the Deferred Resignation Program that were denied by the agency including reasons why each request was denied.
 - f. The number of employees who accepted any other voluntary separation program you may have offered. Please specify the program (e.g., VISP or VERA) and total cost of these offers to date.
 - g. The number of employees who have been placed on administrative leave since January 20, 2025. Please specify the reasons and statutory or regulatory basis for each employee placed on administrative leave, including whether the employee was placed on administrative leave involuntarily, including the reason for using administrative leave voluntarily or involuntarily.
2. Please provide the following cost information associated with employees your agency has separated since January 20, 2025:
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4. Please identify and explain in detail each factor considered in determining:
 - a. Which probationary employees to retain or separate;
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outside your organization—was consulted or involved in the processes described in question 4? Please describe the role of each identified party.

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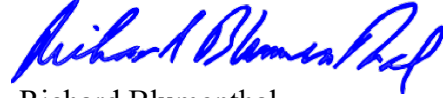
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Sincerely,



Gary Peters
Ranking Member
Committee Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs



Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on
Investigations

cc: The Honorable Rand Paul
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

April 15, 2025

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio:

The Trump Administration’s politically-motivated campaign to decimate the federal workforce—recklessly driven by Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (“DOGE”)—has exacted devastating and lasting harm on the dedicated public servants who work for the American people, including your staff at the Department of State. We write to request information and records to assist the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs’ (“HSGAC” or “the Committee”) and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations’ (“PSI” or “the Subcommittee”) understanding of how Mr. Musk’s unprecedented and dangerous push to politicize and destabilize our civil service has impacted your agency.

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² *OPM asks agencies to justify keeping probationary employees*, FEDERAL NEWS NETWORK (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/workforce/2025/02/opm-asks-agencies-to-justify-keeping-probationary-employees/>.

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³ *‘Thank you for your service’: Trump administration puts USAID staff on leave*, NPR (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/04/nx-s1-5287053/usaid-trump-overseas-withdrawal>; *‘We’re pawns in a game’: US aid workers left in limbo overseas as agency slashed*, BBC (Feb. 7, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cew5pen8edvo>.

⁴ *After mass layoffs, some federal agencies are trying to bring employees back*, NPR (Feb. 21, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/21/nx-s1-5304152/federal-government-layoffs-reversed>; *FDA moves to rehire medical device, food safety and other staffers fired days earlier*, ASSOC. PRESS (Feb. 24, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/fda-layoffs-trump-doge-rehired-medical-devices-85d4743e4ce88dbe3b99c813bad4b702>.

⁵ *Education Department to staffers: Quit by Monday and get \$25K in cash*, POLITICO (Feb. 28, 2025), <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/02/28/education-department-quit-00206765>; *HHS makes \$25,000 buyout offer to most of its workers as Trump administration continues cuts*, PBS (Mar. 9, 2025), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/hhs-makes-25000-buyout-offer-to-most-of-its-workers-as-trump-administration-continues-cuts>.

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⁷ *Social Security Employees Warn of Damage From DOGE*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 17, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/17/business/social-security-doge-ssa.html>.

⁸ *Chaos at the V.A.: Inside the DOGE Cuts Disrupting the Veterans Agency*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/09/us/politics/veterans-affairs-doge-cuts.html>.

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¹⁰ *Mass layoffs at USDA leave an uncertain future for researchers and rural areas*, NPR (Mar. 3, 2025), <https://www.kcur.org/2025-03-03/usda-mass-layoffs-researchers-uncertain-future>; *The USAID shutdown is upending livelihoods for nonprofit workers, farmers and other Americans*, ASSOC. PRESS (Feb. 18, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/trump-usaid-foreign-aid-shutdown-impact-fd4f9bb016f1acf7fb1c2fae7a5c32f5>.

¹¹ *7 Ways DOGE’s Government Cuts Could Impact Everyone*, WASHINGTONIAN (Feb. 24, 2025), <https://www.washingtonian.com/2025/02/24/7-ways-doges-government-cuts-could-impact-everyone/>.

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¹³ *Id.*

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¹⁵ *Stalled Audits and a Skeleton Staff: Inside Trump’s War on the I.R.S.*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 13, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/10/us/politics/irs-taxes-trump-musk-federal-workers.html>.

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¹⁷ *Elon Musk’s mass government cuts could make private companies millions*, THE GUARDIAN (Feb. 16, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/feb/16/elon-musk-doge-government-privatization>.

¹⁸ *Elon Musk goes behind-the-scenes at DOGE, unveils biggest source of fraud in the world*, FOX BUSINESS (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.foxbusiness.com/media/elon-musk-goes-behind-the-scenes-doge-unveils-biggest-source-fraud; DOGE wants to charge one federal agency millions of dollars for its work to make government more efficient>, CNN POLITICS (Mar. 3, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/03/politics/doge-wants-to-charge-opm-millions/index.html>.

¹⁹ *DOGE’s Millions: As Musk and Trump Gut Government, Their Ax-Cutting Agency Gets Cash Infusion*, PROPUBLICA (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.propublica.org/article/doge-trump-musk-funding-foia-congress-transparency>.

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The American people deserve better from their government. The public deserves to know how agency leaders have been implementing DOGE purges, how they intend to manage their nonpartisan workforce in the future, and indeed whether they are following the law and established agency rules and policies. For the reasons stated above and pursuant to the authority under Senate Rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate and Senate Resolution 94 (119th Cong.), Section 12, please provide information responsive to the following requests by April 29, 2025, and on an ongoing basis every two (2) weeks thereafter.

1. Please provide the following information for your agency, broken down by each subagency:
 - a. The total number of employees as of January 20, 2025.
 - b. The total number of employees on probationary status²⁴ as of January 20, 2025, including the number employees on probationary status due to new hire status, recent promotion, inter or intra-agency transfer, or any other reason.

²⁰ CNN POLITICS, *supra* note 18.

²¹ *U.S. intelligence, law enforcement candidates face Trump loyalty test*, WASH. POST (Feb. 9, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/02/08/trump-administration-job-candidates-loyalty-screening/>; *Loyalty tests and MAGA checks: Inside the Trump White House's intense screening of job-seekers*, ASSOC. PRESS (Jan. 25, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/trump-loyalty-white-house-maga-vetting-jobs-768fa5cbcf175652655c86203222f47c>; *FBI advocates appeal to Congress as agents face scrutiny for Jan 6 work*, REUTERS (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/fbi-advocates-appeal-congress-agents-face-scrutiny-jan-6-work-2025-02-03/>.

²² *See Restoring Accountability To Policy-Influencing Positions Within the Federal Workforce*, THE WHITE HOUSE (Jan. 20, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/restoring-accountability-to-policy-influencing-positions-within-the-federal-workforce/>; U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Memorandum: Guidance Regarding Redesignating SES CIO Positions, (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.chcoc.gov/content/guidance-regarding-redesignating-ses-cio-positions>; U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Memorandum: Maintaining the Integrity of the Career Senior Executive Service, (Feb. 5, 2025), <https://www.chcoc.gov/content/maintaining-integrity-career-senior-executive-service>.

²³ *DOGE and the 'arson of a public asset'*, CNN POLITICS (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/10/politics/doge-federal-government-cuts>.

²⁴ For the purpose of this request, "probationary status" is to include probationary and trial periods.

- c. The number of separations processed since January 20, 2025, by the type of separation (e.g. the nature of action and legal authority code) and probationary status.
 - d. The number of employees who accepted the Deferred Resignation Program.
 - e. The number of requests under the Deferred Resignation Program that were denied by the agency including reasons why each request was denied.
 - f. The number of employees who accepted any other voluntary separation program you may have offered. Please specify the program (e.g., VISP or VERA) and total cost of these offers to date.
 - g. The number of employees who have been placed on administrative leave since January 20, 2025. Please specify the reasons and statutory or regulatory basis for each employee placed on administrative leave, including whether the employee was placed on administrative leave involuntarily, including the reason for using administrative leave voluntarily or involuntarily.
2. Please provide the following cost information associated with employees your agency has separated since January 20, 2025:
 - a. The total cost of salary and benefits (accrued or estimated) for all employees who accepted the Deferred Resignation Program and whose acceptances were not denied by the agency.
 - b. The total cost of any severance, buyout, or other lump sum payment offered through any program (e.g. VISP or VERA) since January 20, 2025.
 - c. The total cost of salary and benefits for any employees placed on administrative leave involuntarily for the duration of any period of administrative leave.
 - d. The total cost of training and onboarding conducted within the past two years for all probationary employees terminated since January 20, 2025.
 - e. The total cost of training for any current employees or contractors utilized by the agency to replace employees who have a) been separated from the agency through involuntary termination other than for cause, b) accepted the Deferred Resignation Program or other voluntary termination offer, or c) been involuntarily placed on administrative leave.
3. Since January 20, 2025, have you reinstated or reemployed any employees after their separation? If any, please provide the number of affected employees, the reason(s) for the separations, and the reason(s) for reinstatement or reemployment.
4. Please identify and explain in detail each factor considered in determining:
 - a. Which probationary employees to retain or separate;
 - b. Which employees to reinstate or reemploy following a separation;
 - c. Which employees to place on administrative leave;
 - d. Which employees would be eligible for the Deferred Resignation Program; and
 - e. Which employees would be eligible for any other voluntary separation program you have offered.
5. Who—including but not limited to supervisors, executives, attorneys, political appointees, contractors, labor organizations, human resources specialists, and parties

outside your organization—was consulted or involved in the processes described in question 4? Please describe the role of each identified party.

6. What records or tools, including but not limited to software, electronic systems, databases, questionnaires or surveys, automation tools, algorithms, and artificial intelligence (AI) platforms, were involved in the processes described in question 4? Please name each platform or program and explain in detail the role each played in the decision-making process.
7. What procedural or due process rights were afforded to the employees identified in question 1.b.? Were the employees identified in question 1.b. issued a written notice of their separation? What notice, if any, was provided to employees regarding their right to appeal or dispute the action?
8. Please indicate by subagency those who have been or will be involved or consulted in the process of drafting the following items, and the role of each identified party:
 - a. Agency Reduction in Force and Reorganization Plans;
 - b. Recommendations and petitions for moving positions into Schedule Policy/Career; and
 - c. Recommendations and petitions for redesignation of Senior Executive Service positions.

In addition, please provide the Committee and the Subcommittee with the following records²⁵ by April 29, 2025, and on an ongoing basis every two (2) weeks thereafter:

9. Agency Contingency Plans submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) since 2019.
10. All records transmitted by your agency to OPM or by OPM to your agency on or after January 20, 2025, referring or relating to:
 - a. Retaining or separating probationary employees;
 - b. Placing employees on administrative leave;
 - c. Determining employee eligibility for the Deferred Resignation Program or any other voluntary separation programs that have been offered to employees;
 - d. Employee performance data;
 - e. Agency Reduction in Force and Reorganization Plans;
 - f. Moving positions into Schedule Policy/Career; and
 - g. Redesignating Senior Executive Service positions.

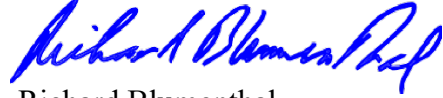
²⁵ “Records” include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (text messages, WhatsApp or Signal messages, emails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).

Please contact the Committee and the Subcommittee should you have any questions about responding to these requests. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Gary Peters
Ranking Member
Committee Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs



Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on
Investigations

cc: The Honorable Rand Paul
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

April 15, 2025

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Doug Burgum
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Burgum:

The Trump Administration’s politically-motivated campaign to decimate the federal workforce—recklessly driven by Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (“DOGE”)—has exacted devastating and lasting harm on the dedicated public servants who work for the American people, including your staff at the Department of the Interior. We write to request information and records to assist the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs’ (“HSGAC” or “the Committee”) and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations’ (“PSI” or “the Subcommittee”) understanding of how Mr. Musk’s unprecedented and dangerous push to politicize and destabilize our civil service has impacted your agency.

Efforts to intimidate and traumatize federal civil servants through mass firings, forced leave, email threats, loyalty pledges, and more not only severely undermine the federal workforce morale, retention, and institutional knowledge, but jeopardize the critical, often life-saving services these workers deliver to the American people every day. While purportedly in the name of increased efficiency, the chaos sown by Mr. Musk’s reckless, arbitrary edicts to the federal workforce will ultimately cost the federal government far more than any imagined savings—generating tremendous amounts of needless waste. As the steward of your agency, we urge you to take all appropriate action to ensure the integrity of the Department of the Interior, its workforce, and the services it performs for the American people.¹

The unjustified assault on the federal workforce has taken shape in numerous troubling ways. Mass firings, forced leave, and deferred resignations leave much smaller teams of remaining employees to shoulder impossible burdens. New and promoted probationary employees have been targeted and treated as disposable rather than as an investment in the future.² Thousands of public

¹ See, e.g., *Trump tells cabinet secretaries they, not Musk, are in charge of staff cuts*, REUTERS (Mar. 7, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-tells-cabinet-secretaries-they-not-musk-are-charge-staff-cuts-2025-03-06/>; *Inside the Explosive Meeting Where Trump Officials Clashed With Elon Musk*, NEW YORK TIMES (Mar. 13, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/07/us/politics/trump-musk-doge-power.html>.

² *OPM asks agencies to justify keeping probationary employees*, FEDERAL NEWS NETWORK (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/workforce/2025/02/opm-asks-agencies-to-justify-keeping-probationary-employees/>.

servants have been left in limbo, some stranded overseas, wondering if they still have a job.³ Others have been fired without regard to their critical functions, leaving agencies to scramble to re-hire them—such as those supervising our nuclear stockpile, tracking the spread of bird flu, and monitoring the safety of infant formula.⁴ Some employees were pressured to take buyout offers of up to \$25,000 under sudden and unreasonable deadlines.⁵ Still more have been beguiled by “deferred resignation” offers of dubious legality with shifting terms, enticing them with the promise of continued pay for no work, only to have the rug pulled from under them when they too are fired.⁶

The chaos imposed by the destructive Trump-Musk campaign to gut the federal workforce threatens the critical services that federal agencies provide to the American people. Firings at the Social Security Administration, for example, put payments to millions of beneficiaries in jeopardy.⁷ The Department of Veterans Affairs’ ability to care for our veterans and their families will be drastically undermined by unprecedented staffing reductions.⁸ The effective closure of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has removed thousands of federal workers whose jobs were to prevent American consumers from being targeted by financial scams.⁹ Indiscriminate staffing cuts at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Agency for International Development risk devastating impacts on farmers and rural communities.¹⁰ Layoffs at the Internal Revenue Service, Federal Housing Authority, and Department of Energy will make it easier for tax cheats to evade detection while driving up housing and energy costs for everyday taxpayers.¹¹ Moreover, mass firings and chaotic directives at the Federal Aviation Administration increase the risks of

³ *‘Thank you for your service’: Trump administration puts USAID staff on leave*, NPR (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/04/nx-s1-5287053/usaid-trump-overseas-withdrawal>; *‘We’re pawns in a game’: US aid workers left in limbo overseas as agency slashed*, BBC (Feb. 7, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cew5pen8edvo>.

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²⁰ CNN POLITICS, *supra* note 18.

²¹ *U.S. intelligence, law enforcement candidates face Trump loyalty test*, WASH. POST (Feb. 9, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/02/08/trump-administration-job-candidates-loyalty-screening/>; *Loyalty tests and MAGA checks: Inside the Trump White House's intense screening of job-seekers*, ASSOC. PRESS (Jan. 25, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/trump-loyalty-white-house-maga-vetting-jobs-768fa5cbcf175652655c86203222f47c>; *FBI advocates appeal to Congress as agents face scrutiny for Jan 6 work*, REUTERS (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/fbi-advocates-appeal-congress-agents-face-scrutiny-jan-6-work-2025-02-03/>.

²² *See Restoring Accountability To Policy-Influencing Positions Within the Federal Workforce*, THE WHITE HOUSE (Jan. 20, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/restoring-accountability-to-policy-influencing-positions-within-the-federal-workforce/>; U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Memorandum: Guidance Regarding Redesignating SES CIO Positions, (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.chcoc.gov/content/guidance-regarding-redesignating-ses-cio-positions>; U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Memorandum: Maintaining the Integrity of the Career Senior Executive Service, (Feb. 5, 2025), <https://www.chcoc.gov/content/maintaining-integrity-career-senior-executive-service>.

²³ *DOGE and the 'arson of a public asset'*, CNN POLITICS (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/10/politics/doge-federal-government-cuts>.

²⁴ For the purpose of this request, "probationary status" is to include probationary and trial periods.

- c. The number of separations processed since January 20, 2025, by the type of separation (e.g. the nature of action and legal authority code) and probationary status.
 - d. The number of employees who accepted the Deferred Resignation Program.
 - e. The number of requests under the Deferred Resignation Program that were denied by the agency including reasons why each request was denied.
 - f. The number of employees who accepted any other voluntary separation program you may have offered. Please specify the program (e.g., VISP or VERA) and total cost of these offers to date.
 - g. The number of employees who have been placed on administrative leave since January 20, 2025. Please specify the reasons and statutory or regulatory basis for each employee placed on administrative leave, including whether the employee was placed on administrative leave involuntarily, including the reason for using administrative leave voluntarily or involuntarily.
2. Please provide the following cost information associated with employees your agency has separated since January 20, 2025:
 - a. The total cost of salary and benefits (accrued or estimated) for all employees who accepted the Deferred Resignation Program and whose acceptances were not denied by the agency.
 - b. The total cost of any severance, buyout, or other lump sum payment offered through any program (e.g. VISP or VERA) since January 20, 2025.
 - c. The total cost of salary and benefits for any employees placed on administrative leave involuntarily for the duration of any period of administrative leave.
 - d. The total cost of training and onboarding conducted within the past two years for all probationary employees terminated since January 20, 2025.
 - e. The total cost of training for any current employees or contractors utilized by the agency to replace employees who have a) been separated from the agency through involuntary termination other than for cause, b) accepted the Deferred Resignation Program or other voluntary termination offer, or c) been involuntarily placed on administrative leave.
3. Since January 20, 2025, have you reinstated or reemployed any employees after their separation? If any, please provide the number of affected employees, the reason(s) for the separations, and the reason(s) for reinstatement or reemployment.
4. Please identify and explain in detail each factor considered in determining:
 - a. Which probationary employees to retain or separate;
 - b. Which employees to reinstate or reemploy following a separation;
 - c. Which employees to place on administrative leave;
 - d. Which employees would be eligible for the Deferred Resignation Program; and
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5. Who—including but not limited to supervisors, executives, attorneys, political appointees, contractors, labor organizations, human resources specialists, and parties

outside your organization—was consulted or involved in the processes described in question 4? Please describe the role of each identified party.

6. What records or tools, including but not limited to software, electronic systems, databases, questionnaires or surveys, automation tools, algorithms, and artificial intelligence (AI) platforms, were involved in the processes described in question 4? Please name each platform or program and explain in detail the role each played in the decision-making process.
7. What procedural or due process rights were afforded to the employees identified in question 1.b.? Were the employees identified in question 1.b. issued a written notice of their separation? What notice, if any, was provided to employees regarding their right to appeal or dispute the action?
8. Please indicate by subagency those who have been or will be involved or consulted in the process of drafting the following items, and the role of each identified party:
 - a. Agency Reduction in Force and Reorganization Plans;
 - b. Recommendations and petitions for moving positions into Schedule Policy/Career; and
 - c. Recommendations and petitions for redesignation of Senior Executive Service positions.

In addition, please provide the Committee and the Subcommittee with the following records²⁵ by April 29, 2025, and on an ongoing basis every two (2) weeks thereafter:

9. Agency Contingency Plans submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) since 2019.
10. All records transmitted by your agency to OPM or by OPM to your agency on or after January 20, 2025, referring or relating to:
 - a. Retaining or separating probationary employees;
 - b. Placing employees on administrative leave;
 - c. Determining employee eligibility for the Deferred Resignation Program or any other voluntary separation programs that have been offered to employees;
 - d. Employee performance data;
 - e. Agency Reduction in Force and Reorganization Plans;
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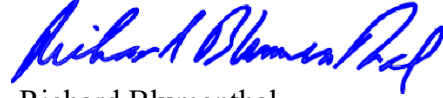
²⁵ “Records” include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (text messages, WhatsApp or Signal messages, emails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).

Please contact the Committee and the Subcommittee should you have any questions about responding to these requests. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Gary Peters
Ranking Member
Committee Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs



Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on
Investigations

cc: The Honorable Rand Paul
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

April 15, 2025

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Scott Bessent
Secretary of the Treasury
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Secretary Bessent:

The Trump Administration’s politically-motivated campaign to decimate the federal workforce—recklessly driven by Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (“DOGE”)—has exacted devastating and lasting harm on the dedicated public servants who work for the American people, including your staff at the Department of the Treasury. We write to request information and records to assist the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs’ (“HSGAC” or “the Committee”) and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations’ (“PSI” or “the Subcommittee”) understanding of how Mr. Musk’s unprecedented and dangerous push to politicize and destabilize our civil service has impacted your agency.

Efforts to intimidate and traumatize federal civil servants through mass firings, forced leave, email threats, loyalty pledges, and more not only severely undermine the federal workforce morale, retention, and institutional knowledge, but jeopardize the critical, often life-saving services these workers deliver to the American people every day. While purportedly in the name of increased efficiency, the chaos sown by Mr. Musk’s reckless, arbitrary edicts to the federal workforce will ultimately cost the federal government far more than any imagined savings—generating tremendous amounts of needless waste. As the steward of your agency, we urge you to take all appropriate action to ensure the integrity of the Department of the Treasury, its workforce, and the services it performs for the American people.¹

The unjustified assault on the federal workforce has taken shape in numerous troubling ways. Mass firings, forced leave, and deferred resignations leave much smaller teams of remaining employees to shoulder impossible burdens. New and promoted probationary employees have been targeted and treated as disposable rather than as an investment in the future.² Thousands of public

¹ See, e.g., *Trump tells cabinet secretaries they, not Musk, are in charge of staff cuts*, REUTERS (Mar. 7, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-tells-cabinet-secretaries-they-not-musk-are-charge-staff-cuts-2025-03-06/>; *Inside the Explosive Meeting Where Trump Officials Clashed With Elon Musk*, NEW YORK TIMES (Mar. 13, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/07/us/politics/trump-musk-doge-power.html>.

² *OPM asks agencies to justify keeping probationary employees*, FEDERAL NEWS NETWORK (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/workforce/2025/02/opm-asks-agencies-to-justify-keeping-probationary-employees/>.

servants have been left in limbo, some stranded overseas, wondering if they still have a job.³ Others have been fired without regard to their critical functions, leaving agencies to scramble to re-hire them—such as those supervising our nuclear stockpile, tracking the spread of bird flu, and monitoring the safety of infant formula.⁴ Some employees were pressured to take buyout offers of up to \$25,000 under sudden and unreasonable deadlines.⁵ Still more have been beguiled by “deferred resignation” offers of dubious legality with shifting terms, enticing them with the promise of continued pay for no work, only to have the rug pulled from under them when they too are fired.⁶

The chaos imposed by the destructive Trump-Musk campaign to gut the federal workforce threatens the critical services that federal agencies provide to the American people. Firings at the Social Security Administration, for example, put payments to millions of beneficiaries in jeopardy.⁷ The Department of Veterans Affairs’ ability to care for our veterans and their families will be drastically undermined by unprecedented staffing reductions.⁸ The effective closure of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has removed thousands of federal workers whose jobs were to prevent American consumers from being targeted by financial scams.⁹ Indiscriminate staffing cuts at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Agency for International Development risk devastating impacts on farmers and rural communities.¹⁰ Layoffs at the Internal Revenue Service, Federal Housing Authority, and Department of Energy will make it easier for tax cheats to evade detection while driving up housing and energy costs for everyday taxpayers.¹¹ Moreover, mass firings and chaotic directives at the Federal Aviation Administration increase the risks of

³ *‘Thank you for your service’: Trump administration puts USAID staff on leave*, NPR (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/04/nx-s1-5287053/usaid-trump-overseas-withdrawal>; *‘We’re pawns in a game’: US aid workers left in limbo overseas as agency slashed*, BBC (Feb. 7, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cew5pen8edvo>.

⁴ *After mass layoffs, some federal agencies are trying to bring employees back*, NPR (Feb. 21, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/21/nx-s1-5304152/federal-government-layoffs-reversed>; *FDA moves to rehire medical device, food safety and other staffers fired days earlier*, ASSOC. PRESS (Feb. 24, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/fda-layoffs-trump-doge-rehired-medical-devices-85d4743e4ce88dbe3b99c813bad4b702>.

⁵ *Education Department to staffers: Quit by Monday and get \$25K in cash*, POLITICO (Feb. 28, 2025), <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/02/28/education-department-quit-00206765>; *HHS makes \$25,000 buyout offer to most of its workers as Trump administration continues cuts*, PBS (Mar. 9, 2025), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/hhs-makes-25000-buyout-offer-to-most-of-its-workers-as-trump-administration-continues-cuts>.

⁶ *These feds took Trump’s ‘fork’ deal. Then they got fired — creating a government ‘mess.’*, WASH. POST (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2025/02/20/fork-resignation-fired-anyway-trump-federal-workers/>.

⁷ *Social Security Employees Warn of Damage From DOGE*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 17, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/17/business/social-security-doge-ssa.html>.

⁸ *Chaos at the V.A.: Inside the DOGE Cuts Disrupting the Veterans Agency*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/09/us/politics/veterans-affairs-doge-cuts.html>.

⁹ *What’s at stake in DOGE’s CFPB shutdown*, AXIOS (Feb. 10, 2025), <https://www.axios.com/2025/02/10/doge-trump-cfpb-scammers>.

¹⁰ *Mass layoffs at USDA leave an uncertain future for researchers and rural areas*, NPR (Mar. 3, 2025), <https://www.kcur.org/2025-03-03/usda-mass-layoffs-researchers-uncertain-future>; *The USAID shutdown is upending livelihoods for nonprofit workers, farmers and other Americans*, ASSOC. PRESS (Feb. 18, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/trump-usaid-foreign-aid-shutdown-impact-fd4f9bb016f1acf7fb1c2fae7a5c32f5>.

¹¹ *7 Ways DOGE’s Government Cuts Could Impact Everyone*, WASHINGTONIAN (Feb. 24, 2025), <https://www.washingtonian.com/2025/02/24/7-ways-doges-government-cuts-could-impact-everyone/>.

dangerous aviation incidents.¹² As one former senior Federal Aviation Administration executive explained, “People die when FAA workers are distracted and processes are broken.”¹³

The disconnect between the Trump Administration’s stated objective of improving efficiency and the destructive actions Mr. Musk has put into motion is not only absurd but also incredibly costly and wasteful. The campaign against the federal workforce will cost taxpayers dearly, both directly and indirectly. For example, in the name of fighting waste and abuse, thousands of federal employees have been ordered to take administrative leave—meaning they are being paid with taxpayer dollars to do nothing.¹⁴ The investments previously made to train thousands of now fired probationary employees will have zero return, and may need to be repeated when DOGE once again discovers that fired workers held crucial roles. As one fired Internal Revenue Service probationary employee complained, “I’m appalled my tax dollars were wasted on getting all those employees trained, and they didn’t even get the chance to get out of their probationary period.”¹⁵ Moreover, federal employee layoffs will cost the federal government billions of dollars in unemployment benefits and wrongful termination claims.¹⁶ Greatly diminished staffs of agencies providing critical public services will increasingly turn to profit-driven, private government contractors, driving up the cost to taxpayers while corporations pocket the difference.¹⁷ Meanwhile, at the same time that Mr. Musk slashes government workers in the name of efficiency, he is seeking to double the staff at DOGE and compensate his handpicked allies with six-figure salaries.¹⁸ DOGE’s budget has ballooned to nearly \$40 million and is financed mostly by payments from other agencies for DOGE employees.¹⁹ In one instance, they

¹² *The FAA’s Troubles Are More Serious Than You Know*, THE ATLANTIC (Mar. 9, 2025), <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2025/03/faa-trump-elon-plane-crash/681975/>.

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Russell Vought closes CFPB HQ, tells staff to stop work*, NPR (Feb. 10, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/08/nx-s1-5290914/russell-vought-cfpb-doge-access-musk; 'Playing games': Reinstated federal workers furious they're being paid to do nothing>, BUSINESS INSIDER (Mar. 21, 2025), <https://www.businessinsider.com/reinstated-fired-federal-workers-got-job-back-getting-paid-2025-3>.

¹⁵ *Stalled Audits and a Skeleton Staff: Inside Trump’s War on the I.R.S.*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 13, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/10/us/politics/irs-taxes-trump-musk-federal-workers.html>.

¹⁶ *Trump layoffs could cost government billions in unemployment payouts*, WASH. EXAMINER (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/white-house/3325231/trump-mass-layoffs-cost-government-billions-unemployment-benefits/>; *Federal workers were fired 'for performance.' Their records say otherwise*, REUTERS (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/federal-workers-were-fired-for-performance-their-records-say-otherwise-2025-02-20/>; *Nearly 6,000 USDA workers fired by Trump ordered back to work for now*, NPR (Mar. 5, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/03/05/nx-s1-5318687/usda-fired-federal-employees-probationary-osc-mspb>.

¹⁷ *Elon Musk’s mass government cuts could make private companies millions*, THE GUARDIAN (Feb. 16, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/feb/16/elon-musk-doge-government-privatization>.

¹⁸ *Elon Musk goes behind-the-scenes at DOGE, unveils biggest source of fraud in the world*, FOX BUSINESS (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.foxbusiness.com/media/elon-musk-goes-behind-the-scenes-doge-unveils-biggest-source-fraud; DOGE wants to charge one federal agency millions of dollars for its work to make government more efficient>, CNN POLITICS (Mar. 3, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/03/politics/doge-wants-to-charge-opm-millions/index.html>.

¹⁹ *DOGE’s Millions: As Musk and Trump Gut Government, Their Ax-Cutting Agency Gets Cash Infusion*, PROPUBLICA (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.propublica.org/article/doge-trump-musk-funding-foia-congress-transparency>.

charged an agency for 20 DOGE employees, which could amount to a \$4 million bill at the taxpayer's expense.²⁰

Beyond the sizeable and immediate economic impact resulting from disruptions to government functions, the broader effort to politicize the civil service endangers its vital, nonpartisan work. Reports have emerged of Trump loyalty tests and questionnaires being used to weed out those not deemed sufficiently loyal to the President instead of the U.S. Constitution and the rule of law.²¹ The revised Schedule Policy/Career and redesignations aimed at senior managers seek to weaken competitive hiring, remove protections from partisan discrimination, and permit politics to seep into every layer of government.²² Such transformation will open a revolving door for political operatives while driving away true talent, reverting federal employment to the corrupt spoils system rejected by federal law more than a century ago, a system where money and favor are elevated over merit and competence.²³

The American people deserve better from their government. The public deserves to know how agency leaders have been implementing DOGE purges, how they intend to manage their nonpartisan workforce in the future, and indeed whether they are following the law and established agency rules and policies. For the reasons stated above and pursuant to the authority under Senate Rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate and Senate Resolution 94 (119th Cong.), Section 12, please provide information responsive to the following requests by April 29, 2025, and on an ongoing basis every two (2) weeks thereafter.

1. Please provide the following information for your agency, broken down by each subagency:
 - a. The total number of employees as of January 20, 2025.
 - b. The total number of employees on probationary status²⁴ as of January 20, 2025, including the number employees on probationary status due to new hire status, recent promotion, inter or intra-agency transfer, or any other reason.

²⁰ CNN POLITICS, *supra* note 18.

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- c. The number of separations processed since January 20, 2025, by the type of separation (e.g. the nature of action and legal authority code) and probationary status.
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outside your organization—was consulted or involved in the processes described in question 4? Please describe the role of each identified party.

6. What records or tools, including but not limited to software, electronic systems, databases, questionnaires or surveys, automation tools, algorithms, and artificial intelligence (AI) platforms, were involved in the processes described in question 4? Please name each platform or program and explain in detail the role each played in the decision-making process.
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In addition, please provide the Committee and the Subcommittee with the following records²⁵ by April 29, 2025, and on an ongoing basis every two (2) weeks thereafter:

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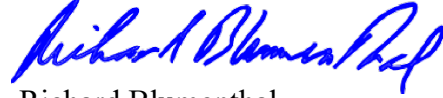
The Honorable Scott Bessent
April 15, 2025
Page 7

Please contact the Committee and the Subcommittee should you have any questions about responding to these requests. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Gary Peters
Ranking Member
Committee Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs



Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on
Investigations

cc: The Honorable Rand Paul
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

April 15, 2025

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Sean Duffy
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Duffy:

The Trump Administration's politically-motivated campaign to decimate the federal workforce—recklessly driven by Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (“DOGE”)—has exacted devastating and lasting harm on the dedicated public servants who work for the American people, including your staff at the Department of Transportation. We write to request information and records to assist the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs’ (“HSGAC” or “the Committee”) and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations’ (“PSI” or “the Subcommittee”) understanding of how Mr. Musk’s unprecedented and dangerous push to politicize and destabilize our civil service has impacted your agency.

Efforts to intimidate and traumatize federal civil servants through mass firings, forced leave, email threats, loyalty pledges, and more not only severely undermine the federal workforce morale, retention, and institutional knowledge, but jeopardize the critical, often life-saving services these workers deliver to the American people every day. While purportedly in the name of increased efficiency, the chaos sown by Mr. Musk’s reckless, arbitrary edicts to the federal workforce will ultimately cost the federal government far more than any imagined savings—generating tremendous amounts of needless waste. As the steward of your agency, we urge you to take all appropriate action to ensure the integrity of the Department of Transportation, its workforce, and the services it performs for the American people.¹

The unjustified assault on the federal workforce has taken shape in numerous troubling ways. Mass firings, forced leave, and deferred resignations leave much smaller teams of remaining employees to shoulder impossible burdens. New and promoted probationary employees have been targeted and treated as disposable rather than as an investment in the future.² Thousands of public

¹ See, e.g., *Trump tells cabinet secretaries they, not Musk, are in charge of staff cuts*, REUTERS (Mar. 7, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-tells-cabinet-secretaries-they-not-musk-are-charge-staff-cuts-2025-03-06/>; *Inside the Explosive Meeting Where Trump Officials Clashed With Elon Musk*, NEW YORK TIMES (Mar. 13, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/07/us/politics/trump-musk-doge-power.html>.

² *OPM asks agencies to justify keeping probationary employees*, FEDERAL NEWS NETWORK (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/workforce/2025/02/opm-asks-agencies-to-justify-keeping-probationary-employees/>.

servants have been left in limbo, some stranded overseas, wondering if they still have a job.³ Others have been fired without regard to their critical functions, leaving agencies to scramble to re-hire them—such as those supervising our nuclear stockpile, tracking the spread of bird flu, and monitoring the safety of infant formula.⁴ Some employees were pressured to take buyout offers of up to \$25,000 under sudden and unreasonable deadlines.⁵ Still more have been beguiled by “deferred resignation” offers of dubious legality with shifting terms, enticing them with the promise of continued pay for no work, only to have the rug pulled from under them when they too are fired.⁶

The chaos imposed by the destructive Trump-Musk campaign to gut the federal workforce threatens the critical services that federal agencies provide to the American people. Firings at the Social Security Administration, for example, put payments to millions of beneficiaries in jeopardy.⁷ The Department of Veterans Affairs’ ability to care for our veterans and their families will be drastically undermined by unprecedented staffing reductions.⁸ The effective closure of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has removed thousands of federal workers whose jobs were to prevent American consumers from being targeted by financial scams.⁹ Indiscriminate staffing cuts at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Agency for International Development risk devastating impacts on farmers and rural communities.¹⁰ Layoffs at the Internal Revenue Service, Federal Housing Authority, and Department of Energy will make it easier for tax cheats to evade detection while driving up housing and energy costs for everyday taxpayers.¹¹ Moreover, mass firings and chaotic directives at the Federal Aviation Administration increase the risks of

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⁴ *After mass layoffs, some federal agencies are trying to bring employees back*, NPR (Feb. 21, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/21/nx-s1-5304152/federal-government-layoffs-reversed>; *FDA moves to rehire medical device, food safety and other staffers fired days earlier*, ASSOC. PRESS (Feb. 24, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/fda-layoffs-trump-doge-rehired-medical-devices-85d4743e4ce88dbe3b99c813bad4b702>.

⁵ *Education Department to staffers: Quit by Monday and get \$25K in cash*, POLITICO (Feb. 28, 2025), <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/02/28/education-department-quit-00206765>; *HHS makes \$25,000 buyout offer to most of its workers as Trump administration continues cuts*, PBS (Mar. 9, 2025), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/hhs-makes-25000-buyout-offer-to-most-of-its-workers-as-trump-administration-continues-cuts>.

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¹¹ *7 Ways DOGE’s Government Cuts Could Impact Everyone*, WASHINGTONIAN (Feb. 24, 2025), <https://www.washingtonian.com/2025/02/24/7-ways-doges-government-cuts-could-impact-everyone/>.

dangerous aviation incidents.¹² As one former senior Federal Aviation Administration executive explained, “People die when FAA workers are distracted and processes are broken.”¹³

The disconnect between the Trump Administration’s stated objective of improving efficiency and the destructive actions Mr. Musk has put into motion is not only absurd but also incredibly costly and wasteful. The campaign against the federal workforce will cost taxpayers dearly, both directly and indirectly. For example, in the name of fighting waste and abuse, thousands of federal employees have been ordered to take administrative leave—meaning they are being paid with taxpayer dollars to do nothing.¹⁴ The investments previously made to train thousands of now fired probationary employees will have zero return, and may need to be repeated when DOGE once again discovers that fired workers held crucial roles. As one fired Internal Revenue Service probationary employee complained, “I’m appalled my tax dollars were wasted on getting all those employees trained, and they didn’t even get the chance to get out of their probationary period.”¹⁵ Moreover, federal employee layoffs will cost the federal government billions of dollars in unemployment benefits and wrongful termination claims.¹⁶ Greatly diminished staffs of agencies providing critical public services will increasingly turn to profit-driven, private government contractors, driving up the cost to taxpayers while corporations pocket the difference.¹⁷ Meanwhile, at the same time that Mr. Musk slashes government workers in the name of efficiency, he is seeking to double the staff at DOGE and compensate his handpicked allies with six-figure salaries.¹⁸ DOGE’s budget has ballooned to nearly \$40 million and is financed mostly by payments from other agencies for DOGE employees.¹⁹ In one instance, they

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¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Russell Vought closes CFPB HQ, tells staff to stop work*, NPR (Feb. 10, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/08/nx-s1-5290914/russell-vought-cfpb-doge-access-musk; 'Playing games': Reinstated federal workers furious they're being paid to do nothing>, BUSINESS INSIDER (Mar. 21, 2025), <https://www.businessinsider.com/reinstated-fired-federal-workers-got-job-back-getting-paid-2025-3>.

¹⁵ *Stalled Audits and a Skeleton Staff: Inside Trump’s War on the I.R.S.*, N. Y. TIMES (Mar. 13, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/10/us/politics/irs-taxes-trump-musk-federal-workers.html>.

¹⁶ *Trump layoffs could cost government billions in unemployment payouts*, WASH. EXAMINER (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/white-house/3325231/trump-mass-layoffs-cost-government-billions-unemployment-benefits/>; *Federal workers were fired 'for performance.' Their records say otherwise*, REUTERS (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/federal-workers-were-fired-for-performance-their-records-say-otherwise-2025-02-20/>; *Nearly 6,000 USDA workers fired by Trump ordered back to work for now*, NPR (Mar. 5, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/03/05/nx-s1-5318687/usda-fired-federal-employees-probationary-osc-mspb>.

¹⁷ *Elon Musk’s mass government cuts could make private companies millions*, THE GUARDIAN (Feb. 16, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/feb/16/elon-musk-doge-government-privatization>.

¹⁸ *Elon Musk goes behind-the-scenes at DOGE, unveils biggest source of fraud in the world*, FOX BUSINESS (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.foxbusiness.com/media/elon-musk-goes-behind-the-scenes-doge-unveils-biggest-source-fraud; DOGE wants to charge one federal agency millions of dollars for its work to make government more efficient>, CNN POLITICS (Mar. 3, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/03/politics/doge-wants-to-charge-opm-millions/index.html>.

¹⁹ *DOGE’s Millions: As Musk and Trump Gut Government, Their Ax-Cutting Agency Gets Cash Infusion*, PROPUBLICA (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.propublica.org/article/doge-trump-musk-funding-foia-congress-transparency>.

charged an agency for 20 DOGE employees, which could amount to a \$4 million bill at the taxpayer's expense.²⁰

Beyond the sizeable and immediate economic impact resulting from disruptions to government functions, the broader effort to politicize the civil service endangers its vital, nonpartisan work. Reports have emerged of Trump loyalty tests and questionnaires being used to weed out those not deemed sufficiently loyal to the President instead of the U.S. Constitution and the rule of law.²¹ The revised Schedule Policy/Career and redesignations aimed at senior managers seek to weaken competitive hiring, remove protections from partisan discrimination, and permit politics to seep into every layer of government.²² Such transformation will open a revolving door for political operatives while driving away true talent, reverting federal employment to the corrupt spoils system rejected by federal law more than a century ago, a system where money and favor are elevated over merit and competence.²³

The American people deserve better from their government. The public deserves to know how agency leaders have been implementing DOGE purges, how they intend to manage their nonpartisan workforce in the future, and indeed whether they are following the law and established agency rules and policies. For the reasons stated above and pursuant to the authority under Senate Rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate and Senate Resolution 94 (119th Cong.), Section 12, please provide information responsive to the following requests by April 29, 2025, and on an ongoing basis every two (2) weeks thereafter.

1. Please provide the following information for your agency, broken down by each subagency:
 - a. The total number of employees as of January 20, 2025.
 - b. The total number of employees on probationary status²⁴ as of January 20, 2025, including the number employees on probationary status due to new hire status, recent promotion, inter or intra-agency transfer, or any other reason.

²⁰ CNN POLITICS, *supra* note 18.

²¹ *U.S. intelligence, law enforcement candidates face Trump loyalty test*, WASH. POST (Feb. 9, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/02/08/trump-administration-job-candidates-loyalty-screening/>; *Loyalty tests and MAGA checks: Inside the Trump White House's intense screening of job-seekers*, ASSOC. PRESS (Jan. 25, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/trump-loyalty-white-house-maga-vetting-jobs-768fa5cbcf175652655c86203222f47c>; *FBI advocates appeal to Congress as agents face scrutiny for Jan 6 work*, REUTERS (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/fbi-advocates-appeal-congress-agents-face-scrutiny-jan-6-work-2025-02-03/>.

²² *See Restoring Accountability To Policy-Influencing Positions Within the Federal Workforce*, THE WHITE HOUSE (Jan. 20, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/restoring-accountability-to-policy-influencing-positions-within-the-federal-workforce/>; U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Memorandum: Guidance Regarding Redesignating SES CIO Positions, (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.chcoc.gov/content/guidance-regarding-redesignating-ses-cio-positions>; U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Memorandum: Maintaining the Integrity of the Career Senior Executive Service, (Feb. 5, 2025), <https://www.chcoc.gov/content/maintaining-integrity-career-senior-executive-service>.

²³ *DOGE and the 'arson of a public asset'*, CNN POLITICS (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/10/politics/doge-federal-government-cuts>.

²⁴ For the purpose of this request, "probationary status" is to include probationary and trial periods.

- c. The number of separations processed since January 20, 2025, by the type of separation (e.g. the nature of action and legal authority code) and probationary status.
 - d. The number of employees who accepted the Deferred Resignation Program.
 - e. The number of requests under the Deferred Resignation Program that were denied by the agency including reasons why each request was denied.
 - f. The number of employees who accepted any other voluntary separation program you may have offered. Please specify the program (e.g., VISP or VERA) and total cost of these offers to date.
 - g. The number of employees who have been placed on administrative leave since January 20, 2025. Please specify the reasons and statutory or regulatory basis for each employee placed on administrative leave, including whether the employee was placed on administrative leave involuntarily, including the reason for using administrative leave voluntarily or involuntarily.
2. Please provide the following cost information associated with employees your agency has separated since January 20, 2025:
 - a. The total cost of salary and benefits (accrued or estimated) for all employees who accepted the Deferred Resignation Program and whose acceptances were not denied by the agency.
 - b. The total cost of any severance, buyout, or other lump sum payment offered through any program (e.g. VISP or VERA) since January 20, 2025.
 - c. The total cost of salary and benefits for any employees placed on administrative leave involuntarily for the duration of any period of administrative leave.
 - d. The total cost of training and onboarding conducted within the past two years for all probationary employees terminated since January 20, 2025.
 - e. The total cost of training for any current employees or contractors utilized by the agency to replace employees who have a) been separated from the agency through involuntary termination other than for cause, b) accepted the Deferred Resignation Program or other voluntary termination offer, or c) been involuntarily placed on administrative leave.
3. Since January 20, 2025, have you reinstated or reemployed any employees after their separation? If any, please provide the number of affected employees, the reason(s) for the separations, and the reason(s) for reinstatement or reemployment.
4. Please identify and explain in detail each factor considered in determining:
 - a. Which probationary employees to retain or separate;
 - b. Which employees to reinstate or reemploy following a separation;
 - c. Which employees to place on administrative leave;
 - d. Which employees would be eligible for the Deferred Resignation Program; and
 - e. Which employees would be eligible for any other voluntary separation program you have offered.
5. Who—including but not limited to supervisors, executives, attorneys, political appointees, contractors, labor organizations, human resources specialists, and parties

outside your organization—was consulted or involved in the processes described in question 4? Please describe the role of each identified party.

6. What records or tools, including but not limited to software, electronic systems, databases, questionnaires or surveys, automation tools, algorithms, and artificial intelligence (AI) platforms, were involved in the processes described in question 4? Please name each platform or program and explain in detail the role each played in the decision-making process.
7. What procedural or due process rights were afforded to the employees identified in question 1.b.? Were the employees identified in question 1.b. issued a written notice of their separation? What notice, if any, was provided to employees regarding their right to appeal or dispute the action?
8. Please indicate by subagency those who have been or will be involved or consulted in the process of drafting the following items, and the role of each identified party:
 - a. Agency Reduction in Force and Reorganization Plans;
 - b. Recommendations and petitions for moving positions into Schedule Policy/Career; and
 - c. Recommendations and petitions for redesignation of Senior Executive Service positions.

In addition, please provide the Committee and the Subcommittee with the following records²⁵ by April 29, 2025, and on an ongoing basis every two (2) weeks thereafter:

9. Agency Contingency Plans submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) since 2019.
10. All records transmitted by your agency to OPM or by OPM to your agency on or after January 20, 2025, referring or relating to:
 - a. Retaining or separating probationary employees;
 - b. Placing employees on administrative leave;
 - c. Determining employee eligibility for the Deferred Resignation Program or any other voluntary separation programs that have been offered to employees;
 - d. Employee performance data;
 - e. Agency Reduction in Force and Reorganization Plans;
 - f. Moving positions into Schedule Policy/Career; and
 - g. Redesignating Senior Executive Service positions.

²⁵ “Records” include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (text messages, WhatsApp or Signal messages, emails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).

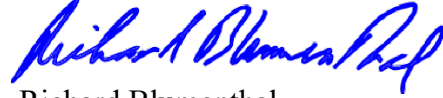
The Honorable Sean Duffy
April 15, 2025
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Please contact the Committee and the Subcommittee should you have any questions about responding to these requests. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Gary Peters
Ranking Member
Committee Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs



Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on
Investigations

cc: The Honorable Rand Paul
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

April 15, 2025

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Douglas A. Collins
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary Collins:

The Trump Administration's politically-motivated campaign to decimate the federal workforce—recklessly driven by Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (“DOGE”)—has exacted devastating and lasting harm on the dedicated public servants who work for the American people, including your staff at the Department of Veterans Affairs. We write to request information and records to assist the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs’ (“HSGAC” or “the Committee”) and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations’ (“PSI” or “the Subcommittee”) understanding of how Mr. Musk’s unprecedented and dangerous push to politicize and destabilize our civil service has impacted your agency.

Efforts to intimidate and traumatize federal civil servants through mass firings, forced leave, email threats, loyalty pledges, and more not only severely undermine the federal workforce morale, retention, and institutional knowledge, but jeopardize the critical, often life-saving services these workers deliver to the American people every day. While purportedly in the name of increased efficiency, the chaos sown by Mr. Musk’s reckless, arbitrary edicts to the federal workforce will ultimately cost the federal government far more than any imagined savings—generating tremendous amounts of needless waste. As the steward of your agency, we urge you to take all appropriate action to ensure the integrity of the Department of Veterans Affairs, its workforce, and the services it performs for the American people.¹

The unjustified assault on the federal workforce has taken shape in numerous troubling ways. Mass firings, forced leave, and deferred resignations leave much smaller teams of remaining employees to shoulder impossible burdens. New and promoted probationary employees have been targeted and treated as disposable rather than as an investment in the future.² Thousands of public

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servants have been left in limbo, some stranded overseas, wondering if they still have a job.³ Others have been fired without regard to their critical functions, leaving agencies to scramble to re-hire them—such as those supervising our nuclear stockpile, tracking the spread of bird flu, and monitoring the safety of infant formula.⁴ Some employees were pressured to take buyout offers of up to \$25,000 under sudden and unreasonable deadlines.⁵ Still more have been beguiled by “deferred resignation” offers of dubious legality with shifting terms, enticing them with the promise of continued pay for no work, only to have the rug pulled from under them when they too are fired.⁶

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¹⁹ *DOGE’s Millions: As Musk and Trump Gut Government, Their Ax-Cutting Agency Gets Cash Infusion*, PROPUBLICA (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.propublica.org/article/doge-trump-musk-funding-foia-congress-transparency>.

charged an agency for 20 DOGE employees, which could amount to a \$4 million bill at the taxpayer's expense.²⁰

Beyond the sizeable and immediate economic impact resulting from disruptions to government functions, the broader effort to politicize the civil service endangers its vital, nonpartisan work. Reports have emerged of Trump loyalty tests and questionnaires being used to weed out those not deemed sufficiently loyal to the President instead of the U.S. Constitution and the rule of law.²¹ The revised Schedule Policy/Career and redesignations aimed at senior managers seek to weaken competitive hiring, remove protections from partisan discrimination, and permit politics to seep into every layer of government.²² Such transformation will open a revolving door for political operatives while driving away true talent, reverting federal employment to the corrupt spoils system rejected by federal law more than a century ago, a system where money and favor are elevated over merit and competence.²³

The American people deserve better from their government. The public deserves to know how agency leaders have been implementing DOGE purges, how they intend to manage their nonpartisan workforce in the future, and indeed whether they are following the law and established agency rules and policies. For the reasons stated above and pursuant to the authority under Senate Rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate and Senate Resolution 94 (119th Cong.), Section 12, please provide information responsive to the following requests by April 29, 2025, and on an ongoing basis every two (2) weeks thereafter.

1. Please provide the following information for your agency, broken down by each subagency:
 - a. The total number of employees as of January 20, 2025.
 - b. The total number of employees on probationary status²⁴ as of January 20, 2025, including the number employees on probationary status due to new hire status, recent promotion, inter or intra-agency transfer, or any other reason.

²⁰ CNN POLITICS, *supra* note 18.

²¹ *U.S. intelligence, law enforcement candidates face Trump loyalty test*, WASH. POST (Feb. 9, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/02/08/trump-administration-job-candidates-loyalty-screening/>; *Loyalty tests and MAGA checks: Inside the Trump White House's intense screening of job-seekers*, ASSOC. PRESS (Jan. 25, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/trump-loyalty-white-house-maga-vetting-jobs-768fa5cbcf175652655c86203222f47c>; *FBI advocates appeal to Congress as agents face scrutiny for Jan 6 work*, REUTERS (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/fbi-advocates-appeal-congress-agents-face-scrutiny-jan-6-work-2025-02-03/>.

²² *See Restoring Accountability To Policy-Influencing Positions Within the Federal Workforce*, THE WHITE HOUSE (Jan. 20, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/restoring-accountability-to-policy-influencing-positions-within-the-federal-workforce/>; U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Memorandum: Guidance Regarding Redesignating SES CIO Positions, (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.chcoc.gov/content/guidance-regarding-redesignating-ses-cio-positions>; U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Memorandum: Maintaining the Integrity of the Career Senior Executive Service, (Feb. 5, 2025), <https://www.chcoc.gov/content/maintaining-integrity-career-senior-executive-service>.

²³ *DOGE and the 'arson of a public asset'*, CNN POLITICS (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/10/politics/doge-federal-government-cuts>.

²⁴ For the purpose of this request, "probationary status" is to include probationary and trial periods.

- c. The number of separations processed since January 20, 2025, by the type of separation (e.g. the nature of action and legal authority code) and probationary status.
 - d. The number of employees who accepted the Deferred Resignation Program.
 - e. The number of requests under the Deferred Resignation Program that were denied by the agency including reasons why each request was denied.
 - f. The number of employees who accepted any other voluntary separation program you may have offered. Please specify the program (e.g., VISP or VERA) and total cost of these offers to date.
 - g. The number of employees who have been placed on administrative leave since January 20, 2025. Please specify the reasons and statutory or regulatory basis for each employee placed on administrative leave, including whether the employee was placed on administrative leave involuntarily, including the reason for using administrative leave voluntarily or involuntarily.
2. Please provide the following cost information associated with employees your agency has separated since January 20, 2025:
 - a. The total cost of salary and benefits (accrued or estimated) for all employees who accepted the Deferred Resignation Program and whose acceptances were not denied by the agency.
 - b. The total cost of any severance, buyout, or other lump sum payment offered through any program (e.g. VISP or VERA) since January 20, 2025.
 - c. The total cost of salary and benefits for any employees placed on administrative leave involuntarily for the duration of any period of administrative leave.
 - d. The total cost of training and onboarding conducted within the past two years for all probationary employees terminated since January 20, 2025.
 - e. The total cost of training for any current employees or contractors utilized by the agency to replace employees who have a) been separated from the agency through involuntary termination other than for cause, b) accepted the Deferred Resignation Program or other voluntary termination offer, or c) been involuntarily placed on administrative leave.
3. Since January 20, 2025, have you reinstated or reemployed any employees after their separation? If any, please provide the number of affected employees, the reason(s) for the separations, and the reason(s) for reinstatement or reemployment.
4. Please identify and explain in detail each factor considered in determining:
 - a. Which probationary employees to retain or separate;
 - b. Which employees to reinstate or reemploy following a separation;
 - c. Which employees to place on administrative leave;
 - d. Which employees would be eligible for the Deferred Resignation Program; and
 - e. Which employees would be eligible for any other voluntary separation program you have offered.
5. Who—including but not limited to supervisors, executives, attorneys, political appointees, contractors, labor organizations, human resources specialists, and parties

outside your organization—was consulted or involved in the processes described in question 4? Please describe the role of each identified party.

6. What records or tools, including but not limited to software, electronic systems, databases, questionnaires or surveys, automation tools, algorithms, and artificial intelligence (AI) platforms, were involved in the processes described in question 4? Please name each platform or program and explain in detail the role each played in the decision-making process.
7. What procedural or due process rights were afforded to the employees identified in question 1.b.? Were the employees identified in question 1.b. issued a written notice of their separation? What notice, if any, was provided to employees regarding their right to appeal or dispute the action?
8. Please indicate by subagency those who have been or will be involved or consulted in the process of drafting the following items, and the role of each identified party:
 - a. Agency Reduction in Force and Reorganization Plans;
 - b. Recommendations and petitions for moving positions into Schedule Policy/Career; and
 - c. Recommendations and petitions for redesignation of Senior Executive Service positions.

In addition, please provide the Committee and the Subcommittee with the following records²⁵ by April 29, 2025, and on an ongoing basis every two (2) weeks thereafter:

9. Agency Contingency Plans submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) since 2019.
10. All records transmitted by your agency to OPM or by OPM to your agency on or after January 20, 2025, referring or relating to:
 - a. Retaining or separating probationary employees;
 - b. Placing employees on administrative leave;
 - c. Determining employee eligibility for the Deferred Resignation Program or any other voluntary separation programs that have been offered to employees;
 - d. Employee performance data;
 - e. Agency Reduction in Force and Reorganization Plans;
 - f. Moving positions into Schedule Policy/Career; and
 - g. Redesignating Senior Executive Service positions.

²⁵ “Records” include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (text messages, WhatsApp or Signal messages, emails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).

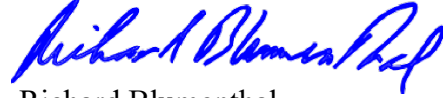
The Honorable Douglas A. Collins
April 15, 2025
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Please contact the Committee and the Subcommittee should you have any questions about responding to these requests. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Gary Peters
Ranking Member
Committee Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs



Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on
Investigations

cc: The Honorable Rand Paul
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations