

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 15, 2026

The Honorable Markwayne Mullin  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Mullin,

I write regarding deeply troubling reports that misconduct within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) under former Secretary Kristi Noem and her former aide and Special Government Employee, Corey Lewandowski, was far more systemic and far-reaching than previously understood. Recent reporting suggests that what may have initially appeared to be isolated misconduct instead reflected a broader breakdown in internal controls, ethics compliance, and oversight across the Department.

As you are aware, Special Government Employees (SGEs) are subject to strict ethics rules and statutory limitations intended to prevent conflicts of interest, misuse of authority, and improper influence over agency decision-making. Public reporting and accounts from current and former agency officials indicate that these safeguards appear to have been systematically disregarded under Secretary Noem's leadership. Alarming, this failure of oversight appears to have extended well beyond Mr. Lewandowski himself and may have reached contractors and other non-career personnel, creating an environment in which improper conduct was tolerated and, in some instances, effectively encouraged.

Specifically, public reporting indicates that Mr. Lewandowski exceeded the statutory limits of his role as a Special Government Employee, exercised influence far beyond what is legally permitted, and allegedly engaged in conduct that raises grave concerns regarding conflicts of interest and the potential misuse of public office for private gain, including reports of a "pay-to-play" scheme involving private contractors.<sup>1</sup> Such an apparent disregard for established ethics safeguards and statutory boundaries undermines the integrity of DHS operations, erodes public trust in the Department, and sets a deeply troubling precedent for future agency conduct.

Additionally, federal regulations plainly prohibit contractors from performing inherently governmental functions, including making binding policy decisions, awarding contracts, approving budgets, overseeing core agency operations, or directing federal personnel. Yet public reporting indicates that Kara Voorhies, a contractor brought on as a consultant and adviser, exercised outsized and deeply inappropriate influence over the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), including over the agency's day-to-day operations and spending decisions.<sup>2</sup> According to reports from CNN, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post*, Ms. Voorhies frequently weighed in and, in some instances, appears to have effectively made such decisions at FEMA.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*Some DHS contractors told White House officials they were asked to pay Corey Lewandowski*, NBC (March, 2026) <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/dhs-contractors-told-white-house-officials-asked-pay-corey-lewandowski-rcna263744>

<sup>2</sup>*'Shadow administrator' at FEMA part of investigation by DHS internal watchdog, sources say*, CNN (March, 2026). <https://www.cnn.com/2026/03/29/politics/fema-dhs-investigation-watchdog-kara-voorhies>

<sup>3</sup>*What spending probes at DHS reveal about Kristi Noem's time in office*, The Washington Post (April, 2026) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/2026/04/05/noem-trump-dhs-fema-contracts/>

Public reporting further indicates that Ms. Voorhies functioned as a “shadow administrator” within FEMA, effectively serving as the “eyes and ears” of Mr. Lewandowski and former Secretary Kristi Noem. According to current and former senior officials, routine agency functions — including engagement with Congress, coordination with governors, and communication with the White House — required her awareness or approval. Reporting also indicates that she worked in “lockstep” with DOGE, including by canceling grants that referenced “climate change,” social media, diversity, equity, or inclusion.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, she appears to have played a central role in efforts to scale back emergency preparedness programs, question the release of disaster assistance, and redirect homeland security funding. Following the tragic flooding in Texas, which claimed at least 135 lives, including dozens of young children, *The Washington Post* reported that Ms. Voorhies “was one of the people who questioned the need for those resources.” On top of all that, senior FEMA leadership — including Acting Administrator Karen Evans — was reportedly required to route key decisions through Ms. Voorhies.<sup>5</sup>

Taken together, these reports raise profound concerns about a systemic failure of oversight and accountability within DHS, in which a Special Government Employee operating beyond the lawful bounds of his authority appears to have enabled a contractor to exercise similarly improper influence over core governmental functions. As the new head of the Department, you have a responsibility to ensure that these abuses are fully investigated, that any individuals who exceeded the scope of their authority are identified and held accountable, and that appropriate safeguards are put in place to prevent such misconduct from recurring.

Given the gravity of these reports and the urgent need to ensure full accountability and prevent any recurrence of these abuses, I request that DHS provide written responses to the following questions no later than April 29, 2026:

1. What actions has DHS taken, or will it take, to ensure that Special Government Employees, contractors, and other non-career personnel do not exceed the lawful scope of their authority or perform inherently governmental functions?
2. What steps is DHS taking to determine whether additional contractors, consultants, SGEs, or other non-career personnel were granted similar authority or influence over operational, budgetary, grantmaking, procurement, or personnel decisions across DHS and its component agencies, including FEMA?
3. Has DHS initiated any internal review, ethics inquiry, or referral to the Office of Inspector General regarding the conduct described above? If so, what is the scope, status, and timeline of that review, and does DHS intend to make any findings public?
4. What corrective actions has DHS implemented, or does it plan to implement, to restore proper oversight, chain-of-command integrity, accountability, and compliance within FEMA and across the Department?

We have seen firsthand, through the roles played by Special Government Employees such as Elon Musk and David Sacks, how this Administration has too often circumvented core anti-corruption safeguards and further eroded the public trust that underpins the federal government’s ability to function effectively. The conduct described above strongly suggests that these failures are not isolated incidents but instead reflect deeper and more systemic breakdowns in oversight, accountability, and internal controls within the Department. Secretary Mullin, you have a clear responsibility to address these concerns, restore integrity

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>5</sup> *DHS Inspector General Probes FEMA Contractor’s Role in Contracts*, Bloomberg ( March, 2026)  
<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2026-03-30/dhs-inspector-general-probes-fema-contractor-s-role-in-contracts>

and lawful governance to the Department, and ensure that these abuses are thoroughly investigated, appropriately addressed, and never permitted to recur.

Sincerely,



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Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Member of Congress