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United States Senate

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

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December 20, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL (HQS-DG-Senate@uscg.mil)

Admiral Linda Fagan
Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2703 Martin Luther King Junior Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20593

Dear Admiral Fagan,

Today, the Subcommittee released an interim report titled, “Coast Guard Efforts to Conceal the Operation Fouled Anchor Investigation from Congress and the Public,” as part of an ongoing investigation into the United States Coast Guard’s (“Coast Guard”) handling of Operation Fouled Anchor, a copy of which is enclosed with this letter.¹ Among the report’s findings were that the Coast Guard may have taken deliberate steps to hide evidence of Operation Fouled Anchor from Congress in 2019. The report also reiterates the Coast Guard’s continued lack of cooperation with the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigation’s (“PSI” or “the Subcommittee”) ongoing investigation into that cover-up, including by limiting access to key records. We write to demand that the Coast Guard immediately produce all records responsive to the Subcommittee’s requests, as well as produce additional records related to its efforts to hide evidence of Operation Fouled Anchor from Congress.

An email obtained by the Subcommittee dated February 26, 2019, indicates that while identifying records responsive to a congressional request, Coast Guard personnel sought to scrub references to Operation Fouled Anchor.² According to that email, a Coast Guard official reviewed the documents to be produced to Congress and may have removed or redacted otherwise responsive records before producing them to Congress if those records mentioned Operation Fouled Anchor.³ The Coast Guard official wrote, “I CANNOT guarantee there is

¹ Letter from Chair Richard Blumenthal and Ranking Member Ron Johnson, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, to Admiral Linda Fagan, Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard (Sept. 12, 2023); *see also* Memorandum, “Fouled Anchor Investigation – Final Report,” at 1-2, Jan. 31, 2020 (https://www.uscg.mil/Portals/0/documents/FOULED_ANCHOR_INVESTIGATION_FINAL_REPORT_AND_EN_CLOSURE-508Compliant.pdf).

² Email from Deputy Chief of the Office of Budget and Programs, U.S. Coast Guard, to Executive Assistant to the Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, Feb. 26, 2019.

³ *Id.*

nothing about [Operation Fouled Anchor] in the 4,000+ emails, but we've done the best we can without putting human eyes on every single email."⁴

As with other records produced by the Coast Guard in response to the Subcommittee's prior requests, this record remains heavily redacted.⁵ The Coast Guard's heavy redaction of responsive records, an issue which was previously raised to you at PSI's June 11, 2024 hearing, has obstructed the Subcommittee's efforts to fully understand the Coast Guard's handling of the Operation Fouled Anchor investigation.⁶ The survivors whose abuse was investigated under Operation Fouled Anchor deserve a full accounting, which is only possible through transparency.

We write to request that the Coast Guard promptly provide all records responsive to the Subcommittee's earlier requests, as well as all records relating to the Coast Guard's February 2019 production to Congress, including but not limited to the 4,000 plus pages referenced in the February 26, 2019 email, as well as any records that were removed or redacted, without redactions, by no later than January 9, 2025.⁷ Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations



Ron Johnson
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *See id*; *see also* Letter from Chair Richard Blumenthal and Ranking Member Ron Johnson, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, to Admiral Linda Fagan, Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard (Feb. 14, 2024), <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024.02.14-Letter-from-Blumenthal-and-Johnson-to-Fagan-Redacted.pdf>; Letter from Chair Richard Blumenthal and Ranking Member Ron Johnson, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, to Admiral Linda Fagan, Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard (Apr. 25, 2024).

⁶ *Coast Guard Oversight: Sexual Assault and Harassment, Hearing Before the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations*, 118th Cong. (June 11, 2024), <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/subcommittees/investigations/hearings/coast-guard-oversight-sexual-assault-and-harassment/>.

⁷ Letter from Chair Richard Blumenthal and Ranking Member Ron Johnson, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, to Admiral Linda Fagan, Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard (Sept. 12, 2023); Letter from Chair Richard Blumenthal and Ranking Member Ron Johnson, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, to Admiral Linda Fagan, Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard (Feb. 14, 2024), <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024.02.14-Letter-from-Blumenthal-and-Johnson-to-Fagan-Redacted.pdf>; Letter from Chair Richard Blumenthal and Ranking Member Ron Johnson, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, to Admiral Linda Fagan, Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard (Apr. 25, 2024); Email from Deputy Chief of the Office of Budget and Programs, U.S. Coast Guard, to Executive Assistant to the Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, Feb. 26, 2019.