

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 26, 2026

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Markwayne Mullin
Secretary of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave SE
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Mullin:

We write to request your full and prompt cooperation with our inquiry into Corey Lewandowski's influence over and potential personal benefit from contracts awarded by the Department of Homeland Security ("DHS" or "the agency"). Recent reporting based on DHS records and statements by current and former agency personnel reveals that Mr. Lewandowski, a special government employee and DHS advisor under former Secretary Kristi Noem, not only has been deeply involved in DHS contracting decisions, but may have unlawfully steered the awarding of contracts to benefit himself and his political allies and to punish those who refused to participate in his self-enrichment schemes.¹ These allegations raise a number of troubling questions about the integrity of DHS procurement.

Public reports indicate that Mr. Lewandowski has been deeply involved in the agency's procurement and that "DHS officials have long suspected that Lewandowski and his closest aides were steering contracts to their allies."² Of foremost concern is that \$220 million in DHS contracts were hastily awarded on the basis of a purported "emergency," without the customary cost-saving open bidding process, to produce an advertising campaign featuring former Secretary Noem.³ The two primary contractors have since received "at least \$23 million" in commissions in connection with the contracted DHS ad campaign.⁴ A portion of the \$220 million in taxpayer dollars benefitted The Strategy Group, "a Republican consulting firm with long-standing

¹ Audrey Fahlberg, *How Kristi Noem's 'Chief' Corey Lewandowski Ran Her DHS Tenure into the Ground*, NATIONAL REVIEW (Mar. 6, 2026), <https://www.nationalreview.com/news/how-kristi-noems-chief-corey-lewandowski-ran-her-dhs-tenure-into-the-ground/>.

² *Id.*

³ Justin Elliott, Joshua Kaplan & Alex Mierjeski, *Firm Tied to Kristi Noem Secretly Got Money From \$220 Million DHS Ad Contracts*, PROPUBLICA (Nov. 14, 2025), <https://www.propublica.org/article/kristi-noem-dhs-ad-campaign-strategy-group>.

⁴ "Safe America Media, received at least \$15.2 million" and "People Who Think, received at least \$7.7 million" Daniel Lippman, *Political operatives with Trump ties raked in millions of dollars in commissions from DHS ad campaign*, POLITICO (Mar. 19, 2026), <https://www.politico.com/news/2026/03/19/dhs-ad-money-companies-00834791>.

personal and business ties to Noem and her senior aides at DHS[,]” including Lewandowski.⁵ Indeed, Benjamin Yoho, the Strategy Group’s CEO is the husband of former DHS Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs Tricia McLaughlin.⁶ Mr. Yoho’s firm helped produce ads for Ms. Noem’s 2022 gubernatorial campaign and received public funds for a separate ad campaign during her time as governor of South Dakota, all while Mr. Lewandowski “worked extensively with the firm.”⁷ The Strategy Group has confirmed to us that it spent \$286,137 of taxpayer funds for the DHS ad campaign, including a \$60,000 “signing bonus” that benefitted the firm, \$20,000 in horse rental expenses, nearly \$4,000 in hair and makeup expenses, and \$500 at a South Dakota magic shop.⁸

Separate reporting includes that Mr. Lewandowski allegedly solicited payments from Dr. George Zoley, CEO of GEO Group, a private prison contractor, “in exchange for protecting and growing GEO Group’s DHS contracts” and then retaliated against the company when Dr. Zoley refused to pay Lewandowski.⁹ A senior DHS official alleges that “within weeks of Lewandowski’s second meeting with Zoley, Lewandowski told him not to award more contracts to GEO Group.”¹⁰ Separately, the owner of an unnamed marketing firm alleges that a representative of a prime DHS contractor, Salus Worldwide Solutions, told him that, in order to be hired as a subcontractor under a \$20 million DHS contract, the marketing firm would “need to make sure we are properly thanking the person who gave it to us. . . naming Lewandowski as the one who had secured the contract and deserved gratitude.”¹¹ The circumstances surrounding the awarding of the lucrative advertising campaign contracts, and the additional allegations concerning Mr. Lewandowski’s solicitations of payments on other DHS contracts, raise serious concerns that Mr. Lewandowski engaged in corrupt behavior while serving as a senior advisor to Secretary Noem.¹²

The possibility that Mr. Lewandowski corruptly influenced or threatened to influence DHS contracts in exchange for direct or indirect kickbacks is deeply troubling. Federal law prohibits the solicitation and payment of kickbacks and bribes that undermine open and fair

⁵ Elliott et al., *supra* note 3 (“No firm has closer ties to Noem’s political operation than the Strategy Group.”).

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Press Release, Office of Sen. Peter Welch, (Mar. 23, 2026), <https://www.welch.senate.gov/welch-blumenthal-release-details-on-dhs-secretary-noems-mount-rushmore-ads/>.

⁹ Julia Ainsley, Matt Dixon, Jonathan Allen & Laura Strickler, *Some DHS contractors told White House officials they were asked to pay Corey Lewandowski*, NBC NEWS (Mar. 19, 2026), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/dhs-contractors-told-white-house-officials-asked-pay-corey-lewandowski-rca263744>.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² Elliott et al., *supra* note 5 (noting the majority of contract value, \$143 million, was awarded to Safe America Media LLC, which was “created just days before it was awarded the deal,” and was registered in Delaware with the address of a “veteran Republican operative, Michael McElwain.”); *see e.g.*, Federal Acquisition Regulation, 3.101-1 General (Mar. 13, 2026) (“Government business shall be conducted in a manner above reproach and, except as authorized by statute or regulation, with complete impartiality and with preferential treatment for none. Transactions relating to the expenditure of public funds require the highest degree of public trust and an impeccable standard of conduct.”).

competition in federal contracting.¹³ Pursuant to our responsibility to oversee DHS and federal contracting, our offices are reviewing allegations of misconduct arising from federal contract awards to assess whether and the extent to which laws and regulations governing honest services and federal procurement may require legislative reform. Accordingly, please provide records¹⁴ and detailed information responsive to the following requests no later than April 9, 2026.

1. Explain in detail whether and the extent to which Corey Lewandowski directly or indirectly has received any compensation from a contractor, subcontractor, or any third party, in connection with any DHS contract award.
2. Provide all records that evidence Corey Lewandowski's review of, denial of, approval of, or other involvement in contracts awarded by DHS.
 - a. This request specifically includes, but is not limited to, any "Record of Clearance and Approval," referring or related to any DHS contract, which bears Mr. Lewandowski's name or signature.¹⁵
3. For each contract underlying the records responsive to request 1, provide all records that reflect the operative agreement or contract between DHS and the contractor.
4. Provide the names and titles of all DHS personnel that approved the exemption of the advertising campaign contracts ultimately awarded to Safe America Media LLC and People Who Think LLC from full competitive bidding.
5. Provide the March 3, 2026 memo authored by DHS Deputy Under Secretary for Management Paul Stackhouse detailing commissions paid to Safe America Media LLC and People Who Think LLC in connection with their DHS ad campaign contracts.¹⁶
6. Provide all communications between Corey Lewandowski and George Zoley.
7. Provide all communications involving Corey Lewandowski and referencing Geo Group or CoreCivic or individuals employed by or otherwise affiliated with those companies.

¹³ See 18 U.S.C. § 201; 41 U.S.C. §§ 8701-8707; 18 U.S.C. § 208 (prohibiting special government employees from personally and substantially participating in any particular matter that would have a direct and predictable effect on the employee's financial interests).

¹⁴ "Records" include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (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).

¹⁵ See Joshua Kaplan & Justin Elliott, *Kristi Noem Misled Congress About Top Aide's Role in DHS Contracts*, PROPUBLICA (Mar. 4, 2026), <https://www.propublica.org/article/kristi-noem-dhs-misled-senate-judiciary-corey-lewandowski-contracts>.

¹⁶ See Lippman, *supra* note 4.

8. Provide all calendar entries reflecting meetings between or events attended by both Corey Lewandowski and George Zoley.
9. Provide all communications between Corey Lewandowski and any personnel or agent of the DHS Office of the Chief Procurement Officer.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Permanent
Subcommittee on
Investigations



Peter Welch
United States Senator