

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 8, 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 for the fourth time since you took office as Secretary to demand prompt answers and full transparency into the most recent allegations that senior Department of Homeland Security (“DHS” or “the Department”) personnel steered lucrative no-bid aircraft purchase contracts that enriched a political ally. The mounting evidence of alleged contracting improprieties within the highest ranks of the Department constitutes an urgent crisis that risks squandering taxpayer funds and entrenching the wasteful and secretive process of awarding DHS contracts without the full and open competition required by federal procurement laws and regulations. We urge you to take decisive action to ensure accountability for any uncovered misconduct and ensure open competition among future DHS contractors. This includes promptly providing answers and producing records responsive to the following requests.

On October 4, 2026, public reporting revealed that in the final hours of former Secretary Kristi Noem’s tenure, DHS “delivered a windfall to one of her political donors by buying five airplanes from the man’s firm at a substantial markup.”¹ Previous reporting uncovered that the Department under Secretary Noem purchased 10 aircraft for \$464 million via a no-bid contract in the fall of 2025 and that many of these planes sat idle despite claims by the Department that they were purchased to remove non-citizens from the United States.² The October 4 reporting alleges that DHS significantly overpaid for five of these aircraft in a contract modification made in the closing hours of Secretary Noem’s tenure, securing a potential profit of tens of millions of dollars for the seller, Daedalus Aviation Corporation (“Daedalus”).³ The Chairman of Daedalus is Mr. William Walters; in 2024, he contributed \$10,000 to Ms. Noem’s American Resolve political action committee.⁴

On the last day of Secretary Noem’s tenure, DHS purchased one Boeing 737 jet from Daedalus for \$108 million, despite that aircraft previously appearing on the market with an asking price below \$90 million.⁵ The interior of that aircraft included “a stand-up bar, two bedrooms, marble showers

¹ Hamed Aleaziz, David A. Fahrenthold, Nicholas Nehamas, Tyler Pager & Niraj Chokshi, *Kristi Noem’s Agency Gave Her Donor a Lucrative Contract Just Before She Left*, N.Y. TIMES (Oct. 4, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/10/04/us/politics/kristi-noem-planes-donor.html>.

² See Letter from Sens. Richard Blumenthal, Peter Welch, and Adam Schiff to Secretary Mullin (Aug. 25, 2026), <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026-8-25-Letter-from-Sens-Blumenthal-Welch-Schiff-to-Secretary-Mullin.pdf> (citing David A. Fahrenthold, et al., *Homeland Security Paid \$464 Million for Airplanes. Then It Parked Them*, N.Y. TIMES (Aug. 13, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/08/13/us/politics/homeland-security-parkedairplanes.html>).

³ Aleaziz, et al., *supra* note 1.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

and a table covered in manta ray skin.”⁶ Another two 737 aircraft were purchased by DHS from Daedalus for \$45 million each, prices that experts estimated “were millions of dollars higher than the typical market value for jets of that age.”⁷ Similarly, on the same day, DHS purchased two 10-year-old Gulfstream jets from Daedalus for \$53 million each, a markup of more than \$11 million each.⁸ The unusually high prices paid by DHS for aircraft purchased from Daedalus prompted one analyst to conclude that “[t]his does not resemble any aspect of an airline marketplace.”⁹

The staggering sums expended on these aircraft and the eleventh-hour approval of the no-bid contract used to purchase them from a company led by a political donor to Secretary Noem appears to illustrate a brazen giveaway by Secretary Noem to her political ally, William Walters. The fact that a separate company led by Mr. Walters, Salus Worldwide Solutions, received separate no-bid contracts under Secretary Noem’s leadership only amplifies the appearance of impropriety and potential violations of federal law.¹⁰ Possibly recognizing the potential for misconduct and waste generated by these contracts, you reportedly “explored backing out of the deal” but “feared a significant financial penalty.”¹¹ After sharing that concern with White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles, she reportedly “told [you] that [you] should not seek to block the purchase.”¹² DHS went on to pay Daedalus “more than \$2 million in both May and June” 2026 to store the purchased aircraft, and the Department now claims that “four of the 737 airliners will not be used for deportation flights, but rather will be used to fly government leaders and members of Congress on overseas trips.”¹³ To date, DHS has not confirmed when, if ever, any of the aircraft will be used for the purpose for which they were purchased, to operate deportation flights.

Congress and the American people deserve the Department’s full and prompt transparency with respect to the shocking waste of taxpayer funds and potential violations of federal law involved in the Department’s aircraft purchases and widespread no-bid contracting. Although DHS reportedly declined to disclose “documents laying out the agency’s rationale for awarding Daedalus its no-bid contract” because they would allegedly “compromise national security or create other security risks,” such a rationale is not a legitimate basis on which to withhold information and records from Congress.¹⁴ Moreover, any ongoing audit or investigation by the DHS Inspector General into related matters is not a legitimate basis for withholding information and records from Congress.

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. In order for us to better understand the award of this contract, plans for these airplanes moving forward, and remedial measures for the American taxpayer, please provide the following information and records¹⁵ by October 22, 2026:

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ For purposes of this request, “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-

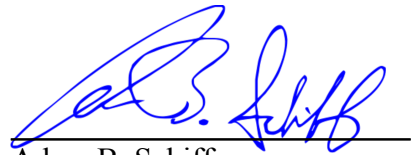
1. Provide the contract(s) or any other operative agreement(s) governing each purchase of any aircraft by DHS from Daedalus.
2. Provide any addendum, appendix, schedule, or other modification or supplement to the records described in request 1.
3. Describe in detail the purchase price, maintenance costs, operation costs, storage costs, and current disposition of each aircraft purchased by DHS from Daedalus.
4. Provide all communications¹⁶ among or between William Walters or any agent of Daedalus and former Secretary Noem, former Senior Advisor Corey Lewandowski, or any other current or former DHS personnel or agent responsible for the awarding or administration of Department contracts.

Please contact our offices if you have questions about responding to this request. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



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



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Peter Welch
United States Senator

created or stored information), direct messages, chats, 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).

¹⁶ For purposes of this request, “communications” include any records, as defined above, transmitted in any way between two or more individuals or entities.