

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 20, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

Secretary Noem:

We write to express serious concern regarding your decisions to reassign and illegally remove Department of Homeland Security (DHS) civil servants within the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). These actions endanger the American public in service of the Trump Administration's radical, nationwide Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) agenda. We urge you to immediately rehire and reclassify DHS personnel who have been separated or reassigned from CISA.

CISA's mission is to manage and reduce risks to our nation's cyber and physical infrastructure. CISA personnel defend against cybersecurity threats from foreign adversaries seeking to weaken critical U.S. systems, including power grids, health care networks, water treatment facilities, transportation systems, and communications infrastructure. Interference with these systems can cause catastrophic harm to life and property. Major disruptions to power grids during severe weather events, such as blizzards, can cut off access to electricity and heat, leaving communities vulnerable and putting American lives at risk.

Credible open-source reporting indicates that the People's Republic of China (PRC) is conducting an ongoing hacking campaign against U.S. critical infrastructure. On October 12, 60 Minutes reported on the PRC's infiltration of the infrastructure that supports Americans' everyday lives, including electrical systems, water treatment facilities, and transportation networks. In 2023, CISA identified multiple intrusions by the PRC into U.S. utilities, attacks described by CBS, as unprecedented in scale and sophistication and consistent with broader wartime preparations. Left unchecked, these threats pose a serious risk to American communities in the event of conflict.

On October 15, CISA issued a directive warning that federal systems themselves are under siege. The directive calls on agencies to address vulnerabilities in widely used federal hardware that has been compromised by an imminent threat from nation-state hackers.

Despite these clear and immediate threats to our nation, the Trump Administration has chosen to illegally fire or reassign key CISA personnel away from their core mission in pursuit of political goals. Recently, Office of Management and Budget Director Russell Vought directed agencies, including DHS, to begin Reductions in Force (RIFs) targeting employees who work on programs that "clash with President Trump's policy priorities." Among those affected are personnel from CISA's Stakeholder Engagement and Infrastructure Divisions, the very teams responsible for coordinating with public and private partners to identify, mitigate, and prevent cyberattacks.

Not only do these RIFs violate the Antideficiency Act, which prohibits federal agencies from spending or obligating funds without a congressional appropriation during a shutdown, they also raise serious concerns about the Administration's motives. It is difficult to understand how defending the nation's cyber and physical infrastructure could be viewed as inconsistent with the President's stated goal of protecting the homeland.

The decision to dismantle CISA's workforce exposes the political nature of these actions. Firing CISA employees during a shutdown while warning of escalating cyber threats reveals these RIFs for what they are: a political maneuver designed to pressure Congress rather than protect the country. The result is a government with a hollowed out federal workforce, diminished cybersecurity readiness, and that is ill equipped to defend the American people from immediate threats.

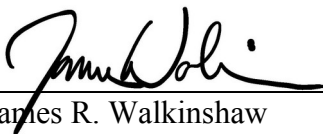
This erosion of CISA's capacity does not end there. Remaining personnel have reportedly been reassigned to ICE and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and threatened with termination if they refuse to relocate. ICE and CBP are already well funded. The partisan One Big Beautiful Bill Act provided DHS more than \$178 billion for immigration enforcement and border security operations and gave the Secretary an additional \$10 billion in discretionary funding, twice the size of DHS's annual budget. Yet the Administration has continued to strip resources from CISA, the agency tasked with defending the systems that sustain and protect American life.

At exactly the time when the federal government is shut down, employees are being furloughed or forced to work without pay, and hostile nation-state actors are actively probing U.S. infrastructure, it is unconscionable that the Administration is stripping resources from the nation's frontline cyber defenders. These actions leave the systems that power our hospitals, water treatment facilities, and electrical grids vulnerable to attack, especially during severe weather events when Americans are most at risk. Rather than reinforcing national security, the Administration has chosen to weaken it from within by diverting trained experts away from critical cyber defense operations to serve political aims.

We urge you to immediately reclassify DHS personnel transferred away from CISA back into cyber defense roles. We further demand that CISA employees who were recently RIF'd be reinstated in positions that strengthen our nation's cybersecurity posture. Finally, we request clear and timely answers to the following questions:

1. What impact assessments were conducted prior to RIFs and reassignments within CISA to determine their effect on national cyber defense?
2. Given that the Administration's RIFs reportedly target employees who "do not support the President's policy priorities," how does the mission of CISA personnel to "reduce risks to our nation's cyber and physical infrastructure" conflict with the President's stated goal of protecting the homeland?
3. What mitigation strategies will be implemented to ensure CISA can continue to defend against cyber threats in light of mounting threats and personnel reductions?

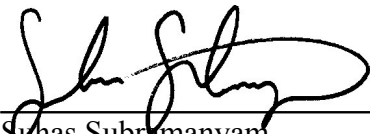
Sincerely,



James R. Walkinshaw
Member of Congress



Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress



Suhas Subramanyam
Member of Congress



Eugene Simon Vindman
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress