

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 20, 2026

Orice Williams Brown
Acting Comptroller General of the United States
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Ms. Williams Brown:

We write to express our deep concern regarding the growing cyber and physical threats facing critical infrastructure, both domestically and internationally. At precisely the moment when our adversaries are accelerating attacks against critical infrastructure, the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), the nation's lead civilian cyber defense agency, has lost nearly one-third of its workforce, raising serious concerns about the agency's ability to fulfill its mission. Given these concerns, we respectfully request that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) examine the impact of recent staffing reductions and programmatic cuts at CISA on the agency's ability to carry out its mission requirements, protect critical infrastructure, and respond to evolving cyber and physical threats.

Critical infrastructure—which includes assets, systems, and networks whose incapacitation or destruction would have a debilitating effect on national security, the economy, public health, or safety—is central to our daily lives. Financial systems, hospitals, and water treatment facilities have all been among numerous recent targets, and the threats of such attacks are increasing. CISA works with private sector infrastructure owners and operators as well as other government partners to enhance critical infrastructure security. According to CISA, the agency is “at the heart of mobilizing a collective defense to understand and manage risk to our critical infrastructure and associated National Critical Functions.”¹ The programs and services CISA provides are driven by an understanding of the risk environment and corresponding needs identified by stakeholders, with the goal of helping organizations better manage risk and increase resilience using all available resources, whether provided by the federal government, commercial vendors, or their own capabilities.

Recent media reports indicate that nearly 1,000 CISA personnel—or about one-third of the agency's workforce—had left or been removed from active service by mid-2025.² In March 2026, Acting CISA Director Nick Andersen announced that CISA was planning to hire more than 300 new employees to rebuild its workforce and address staffing gaps left by the layoffs and voluntary departures.³ In June 2026, while speaking at a House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security hearing, DHS Secretary Markwayne Mullin stated that DHS plans to rebuild CISA's workforce over roughly 12 months – and possibly longer – after the U.S. Senate confirms a new CISA director. This hiring plan marks a significant shift from prior workforce reductions

¹<https://www.cisa.gov/resources-tools/resources/cisa-fact-sheet>

²<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-election-security-cisa-justice-department-fbi-federal-worker-cuts/>

³<https://federalnewsnetwork.com/cybersecurity/2026/03/cisa-eyes-plan-for-more-than-300-new-hires/>

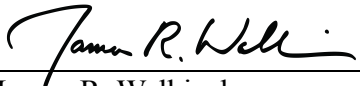
at CISA and contrasts with the current administration's fiscal year 2027 budget proposal to eliminate nearly 900 additional CISA positions.⁴

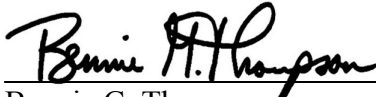
Yet, little is known about the impact of these workforce reductions on CISA's programs and services or what processes and plans the agency has in place to ensure the agency is hiring the right people to address lost skill sets and meet mission demands. GAO has reported extensively on CISA activities over the years and has issued guidance for federal agencies on agency transformation and human capital planning.⁵ Because we have concerns about CISA's resources devoted to protecting critical infrastructure, and given GAO's expertise in these areas, we ask that you examine the following:

- (1) How has the size, position, location, and number of contractors of CISA's workforce changed over the last five years?
- (2) How have CISA programmatic activities changed due to any workforce reductions, and what impacts from these changes have CISA and critical infrastructure stakeholders identified?
- (3) What data does CISA collect and analyze to inform its workforce planning efforts and is that data used to align its resources to agency priorities?
- (4) To what extent has CISA aligned its human capital strategy to meet the agency's current and future mission requirements?

If you have any questions, please have your staff contact Congressman Walkinshaw's office and the Democratic staff on the Committee on Homeland Security at (202) 226-2616. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,


James R. Walkinshaw
Member of Congress


Bennie G. Thompson
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland
Security

⁴<https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/cybersecurity/dhs-plans-to-rebuild-cisa-workforce-after-director-confirmation/>

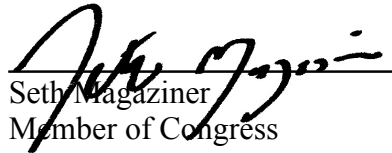
⁵GAO, *Federal Workforce: Key Talent Management Strategies for Agencies to Better Meet Their Missions*; *Government Reorganization: Key Questions to Assess Agency Reform Efforts*; and *Human Capital: Key Principles for Effective Strategic Workforce Planning*.



Delia C. Ramirez

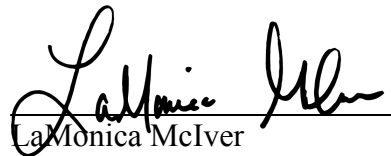
Ranking Member

Subcommittee on Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Protection
Committee on Homeland Security



Seth Magaziner

Member of Congress



LaMonica McIver

Member of Congress