United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 11, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Mullin:

I write to request that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) preserve all records and communications related to Prairie Correctional Facility in Appleton, Minnesota, from January 1, 2025, to date and on an ongoing basis moving forward.

The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee is investigating whether federal spending by DHS was subject to improper influence, corruption, or other violations of federal law. New reporting states that last year DHS bought the Prairie Correctional Facility from CoreCivic, Inc. (CoreCivic) for $495 million, even though CoreCivic had previously attempted to sell the facility to the State of Minnesota for only $75 million.[1] The transaction raises additional concerns about DHS stewardship of taxpayer dollars, particularly in light of recent findings by the Government Accountability Office that DHS has wasted millions of dollars on failed detention initiatives.[2] It also follows allegations that Corey Lewandowski, a senior adviser to former DHS Secretary Kristi Noem, sought improper payments in connection with the business interests of GEO Group, Inc., another private detention contractor.[3] Recent reporting also indicates that the Department of Justice is conducting a criminal probe of Mr. Lewandowski related to DHS contracting.[4]

DHS should take all necessary steps to prevent the destruction, alteration, or loss, whether intentional or negligent, of any records, communications, or other information that may be relevant to this Congressional inquiry, including electronic information and associated metadata. This preservation request encompasses all records concerning the facility's acquisition, valuation, financing, operation, and any proposed or completed sale, including appraisals, offers,

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[1] *Minnesota Declined to Buy a Prison for $75 Million. D.H.S. Paid $495 Million.* New York Times (Oct. 3, 2026) (www.nytimes.com/2026/10/30/us/minnesota-prison-homeland-security.html).

[2] Government Accountability Office, *Immigration Detention: Urgent Planning Needed to Avoid Further Waste of Taxpayer Dollars* (GAO-26-108663) (Sept. 24, 2026).

[3] *Some DHS contractors told White House officials they were asked to pay Corey Lewandowski*, NBC News (Mar. 19, 2026) (www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/dhs-contractors-told-white-house-officials-asked-pay-corey-lewandowski-rcna263744).

[4] *DHS watchdog refers its Corey Lewandowski investigation to Justice Department for review,* NBC News (Oct. 22, 2026) (www.nbcnews.com/politics/trump-administration/dhs-watchdog-corey-lewandowski-investigation-justice-department-rcna605049).

negotiations, contracts, due diligence, financial analyses, internal deliberations, and communications concerning the transaction. It applies to all relevant DHS offices, components, employees, political appointees, special government employees, contractors, and other persons acting on behalf of the Department, including records of communications with CoreCivic, White House personnel, and any consultants or intermediaries involved in the transaction.

This instruction includes all potentially relevant records maintained on official or personal accounts or devices, including emails, text messages, encrypted or disappearing messaging applications, electronic files, calendar entries, meeting notes, and other electronic or physical records. DHS should immediately suspend any applicable records disposition schedules, automatic deletion functions, or other routine practices that could result in the destruction of responsive information and ensure that all relevant personnel and offices receive written preservation instructions. The Department should also take appropriate steps to preserve responsive information held by contractors and third-party service providers.

Safeguarding information necessary for Congressional oversight and preserving federal records are legal obligations under the Federal Records Act. As you know, 18 U.S.C. § 2071 also provides criminal penalties for the willful and unlawful concealment, removal, alteration, or destruction of certain federal records.

Please confirm in writing by November 30, 2026, that DHS has implemented this preservation request, identified and notified all relevant custodians, and taken appropriate steps to suspend routine deletion or destruction of potentially responsive records.

Sincerely,



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator