

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074
MINORITY (202) 225-5051
<https://oversight.house.gov>

December 5, 2025

Mr. Shalom Baranes, FAIA
Founding Principal
Shalom Baranes Associates
1010 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Suite 900
Washington, DC 20007

Dear Mr. Baranes:

I write requesting information on Shalom Baranes Associates' involvement in the ongoing ballroom construction project at the White House compound, which is estimated to cost at least \$300 million and has been conducted without transparency or input from critical stakeholders. To protect the public interest in the fate of the People's House, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is investigating this project to determine compliance with applicable law and ensure transparency.¹

Based on public reporting, financing for the project is provided by private donors via the Trust for the National Mall, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization acting as a "middleman" by "taking in hundreds of millions of dollars in donations that will then be used to fund the project."² The National Park Service (NPS) is reportedly leading design and construction efforts alongside the White House.³ According to the White House, McCrery Architects was the lead architect, with Clark Construction heading the construction team, AECOM leading the engineering team, and ACECO responsible for the demolition of the White House's East Wing.⁴

¹ *Trump Administration Plans to Demolish White House's Entire East Wing as Ballroom Cost Grows to \$300 Million*, CBS News (Oct. 22, 2025) (online at www.cbsnews.com/news/demolish-white-house-east-wing-ballroom-trump-cost/?intcid=CNR-02-0623); see National Capital Planning Act of 1952, Pub. L. No. 82-592.

² *How Trump Barreled Through D.C.'s Bureaucracy to Get His White House Ballroom*, Wall Street Journal (Oct. 27, 2025) (online at www.wsj.com/politics/policy/trump-white-house-ballroom-construction-d1616a3e?gaa_at=eafs&gaa_n=AWetsqdy5RAFZbE1HAQKCCQMxS86P9XesrG6dnU-sjW07-7G6wECUebPy7RqlfCOTk%3D&gaa_ts=68ff9d5a&gaa_sig=jlfz_vNjwz0g817zAeIRWVaXrqkpxvp3Nk9nAFhLZMvvYQ94rDUDz83Hzbv5ZU3q-glxzBeqa6JTQ2nhUgtMYg%3D%3D); Trust for the National Mall, *Mission* (online at <https://nationalmall.org/mission>) (accessed Oct. 22, 2025); ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer, *Trust for the National Mall* (online at <https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/300080738>) (accessed Oct. 10, 2025).

³ *What We Know About the Donors Funding the White House Ballroom*, ABC News (Oct. 22, 2025) (online at <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/donors-funding-white-house-ballroom/story?id=126778550>).

⁴ *White House Picks Clark and AECOM for \$200M State Ballroom*, Engineering News-Record (Aug. 4, 2025) (online at www.enr.com/articles/61134-white-house-picks-clark-and-aecom-for-200m-state-ballroom); *White House Ballroom Advances as Oversight Gaps Emerge*, Engineering News-Record (Oct. 21, 2025) (online at www.enr.com/articles/61651-white-house-ballroom-build-advances-as-oversight-gaps-emerge); The White House,

On December 4, 2025, the White House announced the selection of your firm as the new architect for the project.⁵

The lack of transparency from the Trump Administration into the financing and parameters of this project raises serious legal and ethical concerns. Please provide the following documents no later than December 19, 2025:

1. All communications your organization has exchanged with the Executive Office of the President (EOP), the NPS, other officials of the Trump Administration, the Trust for the National Mall, the National Capital Planning Commission, the Commission on Fine Arts, or other contractors involved in the construction project;
2. All documents related to the White House ballroom project in your possession, including but not limited to solicitations for proposal, memoranda of agreement, architectural plans, proposed contracts, final contracts, disbursements, proposed budgets, final budgets, timelines, environmental assessments, historical preservation reviews, contract negotiations, nondisclosure agreements, and all other documents and communications pertaining to planning, demolition, or construction connected to this project;
3. All records concerning your organization's donations to political campaigns and retaining of political lobbyists or consultants within the last 10 years;
4. The names and roles of all EOP personnel or other Trump Administration officials with whom you have communicated related to this project; and
5. A list of all donations or pledged donations earmarked for the project that your organization is aware of, along with the total U.S. dollar value of each donation, the name of the donor, the date of the donation or pledge, and all communications regarding donations, pledged donations, and any solicitation, mention, or plans to bestow any public recognition or anything else of value in return for a donation or pledged donation.

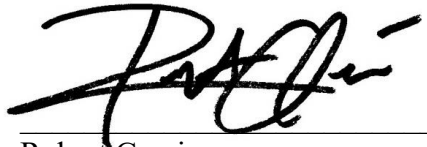
The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate "any matter" at "any time" under House Rule X. If you have any questions about this request, please contact Oversight Committee Democratic staff at (202) 225-5051.

Press Release: The White House Announces White House Ballroom Construction to Begin (July 31, 2025) (online at www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/2025/07/the-white-house-announces-white-house-ballroom-construction-to-begin/); *Demolition Company at White House Gets Taken Apart Over Taking the East Wing Job*, WTOP News (Oct. 23, 2025) (online at <https://wtop.com/maryland/2025/10/demolition-company-at-white-house-gets-taken-apart-over-taking-the-east-wing-job/>).

⁵ *Trump Hires New Architect for Ballroom*, CBS News (Dec. 4, 2025) (online at www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-hires-new-architect-for-ballroom/).

Mr. Shalom Baranes
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Garcia', written over a horizontal line.

Robert Garcia
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman