

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>

April 2, 2025

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Hegseth:

I write following reports in *The Atlantic*, which describe your use of the open-source messaging application Signal to discuss highly sensitive and potentially classified national security information regarding a pending military operation in Yemen.¹ I am deeply concerned that violations of federal law may have occurred if there was a failure to preserve federal records and a failure to report the unlawful destruction of these records to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) as required by law.² I request that you and your staff immediately cease further use of unauthorized messaging and email applications and platforms for government business and immediately comply with all relevant federal records and national security laws to reassure the American public the Administration is not using unofficial and insecure communications platforms to cover up wrongdoing or illegal behavior, obscure government business and records, or expose classified information.

On March 11, 2025, four days before a United States military strike in Yemen, Mike Waltz, President Trump's national security advisor, added the editor-in-chief of *The Atlantic* to the Signal group chat, comprised of members of the President's Cabinet and other senior national security officials.³ Two hours before U.S. military air strikes in Yemen on March 15, 2025, you provided information to the group chat detailing when military aircraft were going to launch, confirming that the target was located, and identifying the target's whereabouts and the expected time that strike drones would drop munitions on the target.⁴ The messages in the Signal group

¹ *The Trump Administration Accidentally Texted Me Its War Plans*, *The Atlantic* (Mar. 24, 2025) (online at www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2025/03/trump-administration-accidentally-texted-me-its-war-plans/682151/).

² 44 U.S.C. § 3101; 18 U.S.C. § 2071.

³ The Signal group chat included Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, Central Intelligence Agency Director John Ratcliffe, Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent, White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles, White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller, and Vice President JD Vance.

⁴ *Here Are the Attack Plans That Trump's Advisers Shared on Signal*, *The Atlantic* (Mar. 26, 2025) (online

chat were set to be deleted after one and four weeks.⁵ It appears that at least one official, Steve Witkoff, President Trump's special envoy to the Middle East, has admitted to using his personal cell phone to view and send messages to the "Houthi PC small group" chat.⁶ Federal law prohibits the arbitrary destruction of federal records as well as the use by executive branch employees of non-official electronic messaging accounts to conduct business unless a complete copy of the electronic messages is copied or forwarded to an official account within 20 days.⁷ You have not specified whether you copied or forwarded the messages to an official account within the required timeline and before they were deleted.

The Federal Records Act (FRA) imposes preservation and disposition requirements for federal agencies. Congress enacted the FRA to ensure that all official business of the federal government, including classified information, is properly preserved and accessible to the public. If Signal messages were not preserved in violation of the FRA, you are required to report the violation to NARA.⁸

Additionally, according to an April 1, 2025 report, the President's national security advisor has held sensitive, highly technical and potentially classified deliberations with unnamed members of the National Security Council (NSC), to which you belong, from his personal Gmail account.⁹ The risk to national security increases every day that you and members of the Trump Administration circumvent well-established national security protocols for communicating sensitive deliberations. As the recent use of Signal by you and other senior Trump Administration officials has highlighted, using unclassified systems, even if they are encrypted, can lead to accidentally disclosing highly sensitive or classified information to unauthorized parties, such as journalists or foreign adversaries. In addition to the federal recordkeeping duties to which you are bound by law, consumer messaging platforms like Gmail plainly do not meet the operational standards required to communicate sensitive, national security information. These communications are banned for a reason: your national security communications are at risk for intrusion by our foreign adversaries whether you are the sender or recipient of Gmail communication.

Your unlawful use of non-secure communication platforms must stop immediately. To address my concerns regarding the potential violation of federal law, I request that you respond to the following questions and information requests by April 16, 2025:

1. Is Signal downloaded on your government-issued phone?

at www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2025/03/signal-group-chat-attack-plans-hegseth-goldberg/682176/).

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⁶ Steve Witkoff (@SteveWitkoff), X (Mar. 26, 2025) (online at <https://x.com/SteveWitkoff/status/1904886084879720683>).

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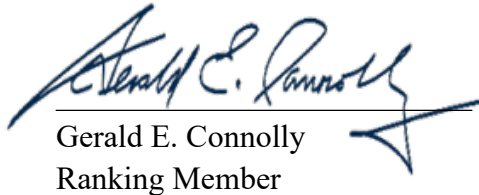
⁹ *Waltz and Staff Used Gmail for Government Communications, Officials Say*, Washington Post (Apr. 1, 2025) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/04/01/waltz-national-security-council-signal-gmail/).

- a. If so, when was it downloaded onto your phone and were you authorized to use the messaging application?
 - b. If you were so authorized, please identify the source of the authorization and provide all documents reflecting such authorization. Specifically, please provide a dated copy of the authorization to operate this application on mobile devices from the agency's chief information officer and all documents that contributed to the decision to authorize the agency's use of Signal on mobile devices.
 - c. Are you using the free, commercially available version of Signal on your government-issued phone?
2. Regardless of whether Signal is downloaded on your government-issued phone, have you used Signal or any other private or unofficial messaging application or platform on your personal phone to conduct official government business?
 - a. If so, were you using your personal or government-issued phone when you participated in the "Houthi PC small group" chat?
3. Did you participate in the "Houthi PC small group" chat while physically present in any country other than the United States?
4. Identify all the instances in which you have used Signal or any other private or unofficial messaging application or platform for official government business, including, but not limited to, your discussions of the March 15, 2025, military operation in Yemen in the Signal group chat titled "Houthi PC small group."
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6. If you failed to copy and forward your Signal messages to an official account within 20 days, did you report the violation to NARA in accordance with the FRA? Provide an explanation for the instances when you did not notify NARA of the violation.
7. Have you utilized Gmail to conduct official government business at any time since January 20, 2025?
 - a. Have you received Gmail correspondence from Michael Waltz at any time since January 20, 2025?

- b. Provide a copy of all correspondence that was initiated from or was sent to the Gmail account(s) of any member(s) or staff of the NSC, or staff of member agencies of the NSC, including but not limited to the Office of the White House Chief of Staff, the Department of State, Department of the Treasury, Department of Defense, the Department of Justice, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Office of Management and Budget, or the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

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 regarding this request, please contact Committee Democratic staff at (202) 225-5051. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

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April 2, 2025

The Honorable John Ratcliffe
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
1724 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20505

Dear Director Ratcliffe:

I write following reports in *The Atlantic*, which describe your use of the open-source messaging application Signal to discuss highly sensitive and potentially classified national security information regarding a pending military operation in Yemen.¹ I am deeply concerned that violations of federal law may have occurred if there was a failure to preserve federal records and a failure to report the unlawful destruction of these records to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) as required by law.² I request that you and your staff immediately cease further use of unauthorized messaging and email applications and platforms for government business and immediately comply with all relevant federal records and national security laws to reassure the American public that the Administration is not using unofficial and insecure communications platforms to cover up wrongdoing or illegal behavior, obscure government business and records, or expose classified information.

On March 11, 2025, four days before a United States military strike in Yemen, Mike Waltz, President Trump's national security advisor, added the editor-in-chief of *The Atlantic* to the Signal group chat, comprised of members of the President's Cabinet and other senior national security officials.³ Two hours before U.S. military air strikes in Yemen on March 15, 2025, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth provided information to the group chat detailing when military aircraft were going to launch, confirming that the target was located, and identifying the target's whereabouts and the expected time that strike drones would drop munitions on the

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target.⁴ The messages in the Signal group chat were set to be deleted after one and four weeks.⁵ It appears that at least one official, Steve Witkoff, President Trump's special envoy to the Middle East, has admitted to using his personal cell phone to view and send messages to the "Houthi PC small group" chat.⁶ Federal law prohibits the arbitrary destruction of federal records as well as the use by executive branch employees of non-official electronic messaging accounts to conduct business unless a complete copy of the electronic messages is copied or forwarded to an official account within 20 days.⁷ You have not specified whether you copied or forwarded the messages to an official account within the required timeline and before they were deleted.

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 - c. Are you using the free, commercially available version of Signal on your government-issued phone?
2. Regardless of whether Signal is downloaded on your government-issued phone, have you used Signal or any other private or unofficial messaging application or platform on your personal phone to conduct official government business?
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Sincerely,



Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

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April 2, 2025

The Honorable Tulsi Gabbard
Director of National Intelligence
Office of the Director of National Intelligence
1500 Tysons McLean Drive
McLean, VA 22102

Dear Director Gabbard:

I write following reports in *The Atlantic*, which describe your use of the open-source messaging application Signal to discuss highly sensitive and potentially classified national security information regarding a pending military operation in Yemen.¹ I am deeply concerned that violations of federal law may have occurred if there was a failure to preserve federal records and a failure to report the unlawful destruction of these records to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) as required by law.² I request that you and your staff immediately cease further use of unauthorized messaging and email applications and platforms for government business and immediately comply with all relevant federal records and national security laws to reassure the American public that the Administration is not using unofficial and insecure communications platforms to cover up wrongdoing or illegal behavior, obscure government business and records, or expose classified information.

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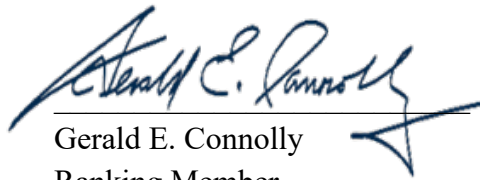
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April 2, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20451

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Acting Archivist
National Archives and Records Administration
700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20408

Dear Secretary Rubio:

I write following reports in *The Atlantic*, which describe the use of the open-source messaging application Signal to discuss highly sensitive and potentially classified national security information regarding a pending military operation in Yemen.¹ In your role as secretary of state, you were a participant in the Signal group chat titled “Houthi PC small group.” I am deeply concerned that violations of federal law may have occurred if there was a failure to preserve federal and presidential records and a failure to report the unlawful destruction of these records to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) as required by law.² In order to investigate likely violations of federal law and address your unavoidable conflict of interest, I request that you, as acting archivist of the United States, initiate an independent investigation of this incident and any other systemic failures to preserve federal and presidential records and recuse yourself from said investigation. I further request that you and your staff immediately cease further use of unauthorized messaging and email applications and platforms for government business and immediately comply with all relevant federal records and national security laws to reassure the American public that the Administration is not using unofficial and insecure communications platforms to cover up wrongdoing or illegal behavior, obscure government business and records, or expose classified information.

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Additionally, according to an April 1, 2025 report, the President's national security advisor has held sensitive, highly technical and potentially classified deliberations with unnamed members of the National Security Council (NSC), to which you belong, from his personal Gmail account.¹¹ The risk to national security increases every day that you and members of the Trump Administration circumvent well-established national security protocols for communicating sensitive deliberations. As the recent use of Signal by you and other senior Trump Administration officials has highlighted, using unclassified systems, even if they are encrypted,

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 - c. Are you using the free, commercially available version of Signal on your government-issued phone?
2. Regardless of whether Signal is downloaded on your government-issued phone, have you, in any of your official capacities in the Trump Administration, used Signal or any other private or unofficial messaging application or platform on your personal phone to conduct official government business?
 - a. If so, were you using your personal or government-issued phone when you participated in the "Houthi PC small group" chat?
3. Did you participate in the "Houthi PC small group" chat while physically present in any country other than the United States?
4. Identify all the instances in which you, in any of your official capacities in the Trump Administration, have used Signal or any other private or unofficial messaging application or platform for official government business, including, but not limited to, your discussions of the March 15, 2025, military operation in Yemen in the Signal group chat titled "Houthi PC small group."
5. During the time in which you have used Signal for official government business, are the messages set to be deleted within a certain timeframe?

- a. If so, have you, in each of those instances, provided a complete copy of the electronic messages and forwarded any such messages to an official account within 20 days, in accordance with the FRA?
6. If you failed to copy and forward your Signal messages to an official account within 20 days, did you report the violation to NARA in accordance with the FRA? Provide an explanation for the instances when you did not notify NARA of the violation.
7. Did any of the other agency heads included in the Signal group chat titled “Houthi PC small group,” notify NARA if they failed to provide a complete copy of the electronic messages and forward it to an official account within 20 days?
 - a. With respect to any agency heads that did not notify you, did you initiate an action through the Attorney General for recovery and notify Congress in accordance with the FRA?
8. Have you utilized Gmail to conduct official government business at any time since January 20, 2025?
 - a. Have you received Gmail correspondence from Michael Waltz at any time since January 20, 2025?
 - b. Provide a copy of all correspondence that was initiated from or was sent to the Gmail account(s) of any member(s) or staff of the NSC, or staff of member agencies of the NSC, including but not limited to the Office of the White House Chief of Staff, the Department of State, Department of the Treasury, Department of Defense, the Department of Justice, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Office of Management and Budget, or the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

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 regarding this request, please contact Committee Democratic staff at (202) 225-5051. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

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>

April 2, 2025

The Honorable Scott Bessent
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Bessent:

I write following reports in *The Atlantic*, which describe your use of the open-source messaging application Signal to discuss highly sensitive and potentially classified national security information regarding a pending military operation in Yemen.¹ I am deeply concerned that violations of federal law may have occurred if there was a failure to preserve federal records and a failure to report the unlawful destruction of these records to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) as required by law.² I request that you and your staff immediately cease further use of unauthorized messaging and email applications and platforms for government business and immediately comply with all relevant federal records and national security laws to reassure the American public that the Administration is not using unofficial and insecure communications platforms to cover up wrongdoing or illegal behavior, obscure government business and records, or expose classified information.

On March 11, 2025, four days before a United States military strike in Yemen, Mike Waltz, President Trump's national security advisor, added the editor-in-chief of *The Atlantic* to the Signal group chat, comprised of members of the President's Cabinet and other senior national security officials.³ Two hours before U.S. military air strikes in Yemen on March 15, 2025, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth provided information to the group chat detailing when military aircraft were going to launch, confirming that the target was located, and identifying the target's whereabouts and the expected time that strike drones would drop munitions on the

¹ *The Trump Administration Accidentally Texted Me Its War Plans*, *The Atlantic* (Mar. 24, 2025) (online at www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2025/03/trump-administration-accidentally-texted-me-its-war-plans/682151/).

² 44 U.S.C. § 3101; 18 U.S.C. § 2071.

³ The Signal group chat included Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, Central Intelligence Agency Director John Ratcliffe, Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent, White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles, White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller, and Vice President JD Vance.

target.⁴ The messages in the Signal group chat were set to be deleted after one and four weeks.⁵ It appears that at least one official, Steve Witkoff, President Trump's special envoy to the Middle East, has admitted to using his personal cell phone to view and send messages to the "Houthi PC small group" chat.⁶ Federal law prohibits the arbitrary destruction of federal records as well as the use by executive branch employees of non-official electronic messaging accounts to conduct business unless a complete copy of the electronic messages is copied or forwarded to an official account within 20 days.⁷ You have not specified whether you copied or forwarded the messages to an official account within the required timeline and before they were deleted.

The Federal Records Act (FRA) imposes preservation and disposition requirements for federal agencies. Congress enacted the FRA to ensure that all official business of the federal government, including classified information, is properly preserved and accessible to the public. If Signal messages were not preserved in violation of the FRA, you are required to report the violation to NARA.⁸

Additionally, according to an April 1, 2025 report, the President's national security advisor has held sensitive, highly technical and potentially classified deliberations with unnamed members of the National Security Council (NSC), to which you belong, from his personal Gmail account.⁹ The risk to national security increases every day that you and members of the Trump Administration circumvent well-established national security protocols for communicating sensitive deliberations. As the recent use of Signal by you and other senior Trump Administration officials has highlighted, using unclassified systems, even if they are encrypted, can lead to accidentally disclosing highly sensitive or classified information to unauthorized parties, such as journalists or foreign adversaries. In addition to the federal recordkeeping duties to which you are bound by law, consumer messaging platforms like Gmail plainly do not meet the operational standards required to communicate sensitive, national security information. These communications are banned for a reason: your national security communications are at risk for intrusion by our foreign adversaries whether you are the sender or recipient of Gmail communication.

Your unlawful use of non-secure communication platforms must stop immediately. To address my concerns regarding the potential violation of federal law, I request that you respond to the following questions and information requests by April 16, 2025:

1. Is Signal downloaded on your government-issued phone?

⁴ *Here Are the Attack Plans That Trump's Advisers Shared on Signal*, The Atlantic (Mar. 26, 2025) (online at www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2025/03/signal-group-chat-attack-plans-hegseth-goldberg/682176/).

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Steve Witkoff (@SteveWitkoff), X (Mar. 26, 2025) (online at <https://x.com/SteveWitkoff/status/1904886084879720683>).

⁷ 44 U.S.C. § 3105; 44 U.S.C. § 2911.

⁸ 44 U.S.C. § 3106.

⁹ *Waltz and Staff Used Gmail for Government Communications, Officials Say*, Washington Post (Apr. 1, 2025) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/04/01/waltz-national-security-council-signal-gmail/).

- a. If so, when was it downloaded onto your phone and were you authorized to use the messaging application?
 - b. If you were so authorized, please identify the source of the authorization and provide all documents reflecting such authorization. Specifically, please provide a dated copy of the authorization to operate this application on mobile devices from the agency's chief information officer and all documents that contributed to the decision to authorize the agency's use of Signal on mobile devices.
 - c. Are you using the free, commercially available version of Signal on your government-issued phone?
2. Regardless of whether Signal is downloaded on your government-issued phone, have you used Signal or any other private or unofficial messaging application or platform on your personal phone to conduct official government business?
 - a. If so, were you using your personal or government-issued phone when you participated in the "Houthi PC small group" chat?
3. Did you participate in the "Houthi PC small group" chat while physically present in any country other than the United States?
4. Identify all the instances in which you have used Signal or any other private or unofficial messaging application or platform for official government business, including, but not limited to, your discussions of the March 15, 2025, military operation in Yemen in the Signal group chat titled "Houthi PC small group."
5. During the time in which you have used Signal for official government business, are the messages set to be deleted within a certain timeframe?
 - a. If so, have you, in each of those instances, provided a complete copy of the electronic messages and forwarded any such messages to an official account within 20 days, in accordance with the FRA?
6. If you failed to copy and forward your Signal messages to an official account within 20 days, did you report the violation to NARA in accordance with the FRA? Provide an explanation for the instances when you did not notify NARA of the violation.
7. Have you utilized Gmail to conduct official government business at any time since January 20, 2025?
 - a. Have you received Gmail correspondence from Michael Waltz at any time since January 20, 2025?

- b. Provide a copy of all correspondence that was initiated from or was sent to the Gmail account(s) of any member(s) or staff of the NSC, or staff of member agencies of the NSC, including but not limited to the Office of the White House Chief of Staff, the Department of State, Department of the Treasury, Department of Defense, the Department of Justice, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Office of Management and Budget, or the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

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 regarding this request, please contact Committee Democratic staff at (202) 225-5051. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman