

# Congress of the United States

## Washington, DC 20515

July 9, 2026

Ms. Orice Williams Brown  
Acting Comptroller General of the United States  
Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Ms. Brown:

We are deeply concerned by Trump Administration officials' flagrant personal use of government-owned aircraft and other expensive air travel on the taxpayers' dime. As Americans deal with President Trump's unprecedented affordability crisis and are forced to spend hundreds of extra dollars on groceries, electricity, and housing,<sup>1</sup> they have watched as Trump Administration officials waste taxpayer dollars on extravagant and luxurious air travel. To make matters worse, the Trump Administration has provided no transparency into whether this air travel complies with federal regulations. To assist with essential oversight, we write to request that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) review federal agency compliance with Office of Management and Budget's Circular No. A-126, "Improving the Management and Use of Government Aircraft," and the General Services Administration's (GSA) Federal Travel Regulation requirements, to ensure that taxpayers are not being forced to cover exorbitant and corrupt costs.<sup>2</sup>

Since becoming Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Kash Patel has continued to spark outrage and concern over his repeated use of government-owned aircraft for his leisure. According to ongoing public reporting, Director Patel has taken more than 10 trips that are likely to violate regulations. For example:

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<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Consumer Price Index Summary—May 2026* (June 10, 2026) (USD L-26-0824) (online at [www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/cpi.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/cpi.pdf)); Joint Economic Committee Minority, *New Data: Families Paid \$310 More for Groceries During Trump's First Year in Office* (Jan. 2026) (online at [www.jec.senate.gov/public/\\_cache/files/8094f43f-cbc9-4d83-b5cc-273fac048f32/jec-grocery-costs-final-1-.pdf](http://www.jec.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/8094f43f-cbc9-4d83-b5cc-273fac048f32/jec-grocery-costs-final-1-.pdf)); Joint Economic Committee Minority, *Families in the United States Have Had to Spend \$3,100+ More Under Trump* (June 2026) (online at [www.jec.senate.gov/public/\\_cache/files/efcfa784-b7a0-4430-b0d8-e0780c3f77cd/us-inflation-fact-sheet.pdf](http://www.jec.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/efcfa784-b7a0-4430-b0d8-e0780c3f77cd/us-inflation-fact-sheet.pdf)).

<sup>2</sup> Office of Management and Budget, Office of Federal Procurement Policy, *Improving the Management and Use of Government Aircraft*, 81 Fed. Reg. 76385 (Nov. 2, 2016) (notice); 41 C.F.R. § F 300-1-304-9 (2026).

- **February 20, 2026:** Traveled to Milan, Italy, on FBI-controlled aircraft to watch a hockey match at the Winter Olympics.<sup>3</sup>
- **October 20, 2025:** Traveled to Pennsylvania to attend the Real American Freestyle wrestling tournament where his girlfriend performed.<sup>4</sup>
- Following his Senate confirmation, traveled to Nashville, Tennessee, multiple times to visit his girlfriend.<sup>5</sup>

Presidents across administrations have designated the FBI Director as a “required use” traveler within the Department of Justice. However, OMB Circular A-126 *requires* designees to reimburse the government for personal and political travel.<sup>6</sup> Given the FBI’s lack of response to a December 1, 2025, request from House Judiciary Committee Ranking Member Jamie Raskin and Rep. Sydney Kamlager-Dove, the Oversight Committee reiterates congressional interest in learning whether reimbursement standards for personal or excessive air travel are being followed.<sup>7</sup> We also echo the February 24, 2026, requests made by the Senate Committee on the Judiciary Ranking Member Dick Durbin “that the GAO’s ongoing review incorporate the Director’s latest international travel.”<sup>8</sup>

Our concerns that taxpayer dollars are being used to fund unnecessary luxury travel are not isolated to one agency. GSA regulations state that “taxpayers should pay no more than necessary for the transportation of travelers” and that “a determination that another method of

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<sup>3</sup> *Kash Patel’s Use of the FBI Jet Sparks Outrage. Here’s Why He Couldn’t Travel to the Olympics Any Other Way*, CNN (Feb. 24, 2026) (online at [www.cnn.com/2026/02/24/politics/kash-patel-fbi-jet-use-explained](http://www.cnn.com/2026/02/24/politics/kash-patel-fbi-jet-use-explained)).

<sup>4</sup> *It Sure Looks Like Kash Patel Used the FBI’s Jet to Go on a Date*, New Republic (Oct. 29, 2025) (online at <https://newrepublic.com/post/202430/kash-patel-fbi-private-jet-wrestling-date>); *FBI Director Kash Patel Stops by Bryce Jordan Center for Real American Freestyle*, Onward State (Oct. 31, 2025) (online at <https://onwardstate.com/2025/10/31/fbi-director-kash-patel-accused-of-using-60m-government-jet-for-personal-trip-to-penn-state/>).

<sup>5</sup> Campaign Legal Center, *FBI Director Kash Patel Faces Inquiry from Campaign Legal Center for Multiple Personal Trips on Government Aircraft* (Mar. 5, 2026) (online at <https://campaignlegal.org/press-releases/fbi-director-kash-patel-faces-inquiry-campaign-legal-center-multiple-personal-trips>); *Patel Under Scrutiny for Use of SWAT Teams to Protect His Girlfriend*, New York Times (Nov. 24, 2025) (online at [www.nytimes.com/2025/11/23/us/politics/kash-patel-girlfriend-fbi-protection.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2025/11/23/us/politics/kash-patel-girlfriend-fbi-protection.html)).

<sup>6</sup> Office of Management and Budget, Office of Federal Procurement Policy, *Improving the Management and Use of Government Aircraft*, 81 Fed. Reg. 76385 (Nov. 2, 2016) (notice); 41 C.F.R. § F 300-1-304-9 (2026); See Office of Management and Budget, *Circular No. A-126 Revised* (May 22, 1992) (online at <https://whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Circular-a-126.pdf>).

<sup>7</sup> Letter from Ranking Member Jamie Raskin and Rep. Sydney Kamlager-Dove, House Committee on the Judiciary, to Director Kash Patel, Federal Bureau of Investigation (Dec. 1, 2025) (online at <https://democrats-judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/democrats-judiciary.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/2025-12-01-raskin-kamlager-dove-to-patel-fbi-re-plane.pdf>).

<sup>8</sup> Letter from Ranking Member Dick L. Durbin, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, to Orice Williams Brown, Acting Comptroller, Government Accountability Office, and Don R. Berthiaume, Acting Inspector General, Department of Justice (Feb. 24, 2026) (online at [www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2026-02-24%20Letter%20to%20GAO%20and%20DOJ%20IG%20on%20Kash%20Patel%20Olympic%20Travel.pdf](http://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2026-02-24%20Letter%20to%20GAO%20and%20DOJ%20IG%20on%20Kash%20Patel%20Olympic%20Travel.pdf)).

transportation is more advantageous to the Government will not be made on the basis of personal preference or inconvenience to the traveler.”<sup>9</sup> Yet, federal procurement data shows that agencies more than doubled spending on air travel in recent years, with costs growing from \$2.35 billion in 2016 to more than \$5 billion in FY2025.<sup>10</sup> Actual spending on air travel may be considerably higher if agencies use charge cards to charter air transportation, such as helicopter travel. GAO has previously reported on agencies’ use of helicopters in the D.C. area specifically, where the number of flights has been growing in recent years.<sup>11</sup>

We understand that GAO has done similar work on this matter, specifically a 2013 report titled, “Department of Justice: Executives’ Use of Aircraft for Nonmission Purposes.”<sup>12</sup> Thus, this explosive growth and the long-ignored concerns expressed by both chambers of Congress surrounding the Trump Administration’s use of luxury travel on the taxpayers’ dime require timely attention. Americans deserve transparency surrounding Trump Administration officials’ compliance with federal requirements related to travel costs and oversight bodies need timely assessments to identify waste and abuse. Therefore, in addition to GAO’s ongoing work on this issue, we ask that you also review agencies with high annual obligations for air transportation. Specifically, we ask that GAO:

1. Review circumstances under which government-owned aircraft are being used by agency officials for non-mission purposes, such as personal travel, and the costs associated with these flights;
2. Review agency processes for tracking, documenting, and reporting agency and component executives’ use of agency aircraft;
3. Review agencies’ annual spending on air transportation for agency officials, including agency leadership use of government-owned aircraft and chartered aircraft that is procured via contract or charge card;
4. Assess agency officials’ use of government-owned aircraft with respect to OMB and GSA regulations and determine if reimbursements for personal travel were collected in accordance with federal requirements; and
5. Identify the amount reimbursed or not reimbursed in accordance with those policies.

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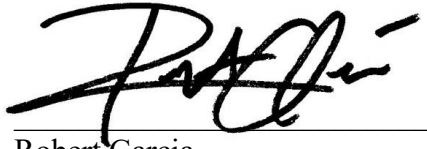
<sup>9</sup> *Federal Travel Regulation System*, 41 CFR § 301-70.100 (online at [www.ecfr.gov/current/title-41/part-301-10/section-301-10.260](http://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-41/part-301-10/section-301-10.260)).

<sup>10</sup> SAM.gov (accessed July 8, 2026). To identify agency obligations for air transportation during fiscal years 2016 – 2025, we queried Sam.gov using four codes from the Federal Procurement Data System Product and Service Code Manual (V119, V121, V211, and V221) that are associated with air transportation services.

<sup>11</sup> Government Accountability Office, *Military Helicopter Operators Should Improve Outreach to Affected Communities in the D.C. Area* (Mar. 2026) (online at [www.gao.gov/assets/gao-26-107758.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-26-107758.pdf)).

<sup>12</sup> Government Accountability Office, *Department of Justice: Executives’ Use of Aircraft for Nonmission Purposes* (Feb. 2013) (GAO-13-235) (online at [www.gao.gov/assets/gao-13-235.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-13-235.pdf)).

Sincerely,



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Robert Garcia  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Oversight  
and Government Reform



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Margaret Wood Hassan  
Ranking Member  
U.S. Congress Joint Economic  
Committee

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman  
House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

The Honorable David Schweikert, Chairman  
U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee