

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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<https://oversight.house.gov>

August 24, 2026

The Honorable Todd Blanche
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Blanche:

Oversight Democrats are investigating the widespread violation of Americans' civil liberties by Immigrations and Customs Enforcement and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).¹ Public reporting indicates that DHS threatened the civil liberties of Americans and waged a sweeping campaign of surveillance targeting numerous labor unions, environmental advocates, and even a bicycle shop, as the Trump Administration attempted to silence opposition to its violent immigration crackdown in Minnesota.² The federal government infiltrated citizens' group chats, surveilled places of worship, and obtained financial records of organizations that are not accused of any criminal wrongdoing.³ Oversight Democrats demand detailed information on DHS's use of administrative subpoenas for immigration enforcement-related investigations in Minnesota, along with a list of individuals responsible for greenlighting and overseeing surveillance in support of Operation Puppet Master and Project Whipple Shield.

On August 13, 2026, the *New York Times* reported that, in the days immediately following the killing of Alex Pretti at the hands of federal immigration agents, DHS opened an investigation into several social and political organizations and individuals deemed critical of the Trump Administration's crackdown on Minnesota,⁴ without a legitimate basis to suspect criminal misconduct. Those caught up in DHS's dragnet included major labor unions like the

¹ See Minority Staff, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, *Operation Metro Surge: How Federal Law Enforcement Led to the Killings of Renee Good and Alex Pretti* (Feb. 3, 2026) (online at https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/imo/media/doc/mn_oversight_report.pdf); see Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Democrats, *Immigration Enforcement Dashboard* (online at <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/immigration-dashboard>) (accessed Aug. 19, 2026).

² *U.S. Investigated Left-Leaning Groups During Minnesota Immigration Crackdown*, New York Times (Aug. 13, 2026) (online at www.nytimes.com/2026/08/13/us/politics/dhs-inquiry-immigration-protests-minnesota.html).

³ *Id.*

⁴ *U.S. Investigated Left-Leaning Groups During Minnesota Immigration Crackdown*, New York Times (Aug. 13, 2026) (online at www.nytimes.com/2026/08/13/us/politics/dhs-inquiry-immigration-protests-minnesota.html).

Communications Workers of America and the Service Employees International Union, environmental groups like the Sunrise Movement, and community groups like Voices for Racial Justice, none of whom were accused of criminal wrongdoing.⁵ DHS reportedly used expansive surveillance tools against these Americans, from employing administrative subpoenas to obtain years of banking information to using undercover federal agents to infiltrate groups and, in one example, entice protestors into discussing or committing a crime.⁶ This DHS surveillance campaign inserted itself into Minnesota libraries, parks, churches, group chats, and protests, all without a legitimate, articulated basis for suspecting a crime had occurred.⁷

The Department of Justice (DOJ) appears to have attempted to use information gathered by DHS covert surveillance to claim the existence of a vast conspiracy to criminally impede immigration enforcement involving national labor unions, the Minneapolis Federation of Educators, Vets for Peace, and the Grease Pit bicycle repair shop.⁸ Yet, none of these groups surveilled by DHS have faced criminal charges, nor have federal law enforcement demonstrated a legitimate basis to suspect criminal activity.⁹

For all the histrionic claims of weaponization of the federal government against Donald Trump, this Administration has turned nearly all facets of the federal government to target legitimate criticism and to harass its political opponents. Instead of investigating the killings of Renee Good and Alex Pretti, DHS sought to criminalize U.S. citizens exercising their constitutional rights and protesting the Trump Administration's abuses. DHS crossed the line of routine law enforcement into targeting political dissent—a violation that is unacceptable to American democracy and demands strict accountability for all those involved. Federal agents spying on unions and protestors without legitimate basis echo historical violations of Americans' civil liberties under the Cold War-era COINTELPRO domestic surveillance program.¹⁰ To that end, I demand the following documents and information by September 7, 2026:

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *U.S. Investigated Left-Leaning Groups During Minnesota Immigration Crackdown*, New York Times (Aug. 13, 2026) (online at www.nytimes.com/2026/08/13/us/politics/dhs-inquiry-immigration-protests-minnesota.html); *United States v. Sant*, No. 0:26-cr-00115-KMM-DTS (D. Minn., Aug. 13, 2026) (online at https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.mnd.234416/gov.uscourts.mnd.234416.212.0_2.pdf) (defendant's motion for discovery under Rule 16 and *Brady/Giglio*).

⁷ *U.S. Investigated Left-Leaning Groups During Minnesota Immigration Crackdown*, New York Times (Aug. 13, 2026) (online at www.nytimes.com/2026/08/13/us/politics/dhs-inquiry-immigration-protests-minnesota.html).

⁸ *U.S. Investigated Left-Leaning Groups During Minnesota Immigration Crackdown*, New York Times (Aug. 13, 2026) (online at www.nytimes.com/2026/08/13/us/politics/dhs-inquiry-immigration-protests-minnesota.html); *United States v. Sant*, No. 0:26-cr-00115-KMM-DTS (D. Minn., Aug. 13, 2026) (online at https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.mnd.234416/gov.uscourts.mnd.234416.212.0_2.pdf) (defendant's motion for discovery under Rule 16 and *Brady/Giglio*).

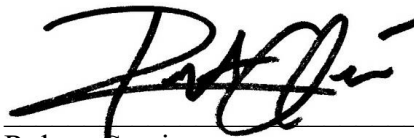
⁹ *U.S. Investigated Left-Leaning Groups During Minnesota Immigration Crackdown*, New York Times (Aug. 13, 2026) (online at www.nytimes.com/2026/08/13/us/politics/dhs-inquiry-immigration-protests-minnesota.html).

¹⁰ Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, *Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans*, Book II, 94th Cong. (1976) (S. Rept. 94-755) (online at <https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/sites-default-files-94755-ii.pdf>).

1. All documents, records, and communications in the possession of DOJ related to Operation Puppet Master, Project Whipple Shield, and all other DHS surveillance operations involving protest activity in Minnesota since January 2026, including but not limited to:
 - a. A list of all persons and groups surveilled or investigated by DHS, and justifications for why each person or group was targeted;
 - b. All reports of investigation (“ROIs”) filed as a part of Operation Puppet Master, Project Whipple Shield, or any other DHS surveillance operations involving protest activity in Minnesota since January 2026; and
 - c. All administrative subpoenas issued pursuant to these investigations;
2. A list of all DOJ personnel involved in designing, approving, and overseeing surveillance in connection to Operation Puppet Master, Project Whipple Shield, and all other DHS surveillance operations involving protest activity in Minnesota since January 2026;
3. All DOJ internal guidance, trainings, and memoranda concerning the use of administrative subpoenas and the admissibility of those materials into evidence;
4. All DOJ applications for a search warrant filed in the District of Minnesota in connection to Operation Puppet Master, Project Whipple Shield, or any other DHS surveillance operations involving protest activity in Minnesota since January 2026; and
5. All materials provided by DHS to the Department of Justice as a result of Operation Puppet Master, Project Whipple Shield, and all other DHS surveillance operations involving protest activity in Minnesota since January 2026.

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,” as well as legislative jurisdiction of federal procurement, under House Rule X. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Committee Democratic staff at (202) 225-5051.

Sincerely,

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

Robert Garcia
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman