

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

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<https://oversight.house.gov>

September 18, 2026

Board of Trustees
The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
2700 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20566

Dear Trustees:

According to recent reporting and emergency court filings, President Trump and the Trump-controlled Board of Trustees for the Kennedy Center (the Center) appear to be laying the groundwork to demolish the prized cultural institution because the President cannot put his name on it without Congressional authorization.¹ The threat to destroy the Center following the failure of the President's illegal attempt to rename the building appears to be a gross act of extortion directed against the American people. I request that you immediately preserve and provide to the Committee all records, documents, and communications concerning the planned closure and demolition of the Center, comply with relevant court orders, and halt any action which would harm the Center or President Kennedy's legacy.

On September 15, 2026, a federal court ruled for a second time that the President's name could not be added to the Center's façade without Congressional authorization; just hours later, the board—which the President had stacked with lackeys that duly elected him chair—voted to “temporarily” close the Center, citing poor finances and need for repairs.² The next day, on September 16: (1) the Center's Executive Director announced that the Center would close immediately; (2) hours later, President Trump said the Center would “end up being ripped down” unless his administration was “recognized”; and (3) photos showed President Trump aboard Air Force One that evening reviewing a poster that appeared to read “Kennedy Center DEMOLISHED.”³ On September 17, the court ordered the Board to provide more than 30 days

¹ *Trump's Handpicked Kennedy Center Board Votes to Immediately Close Venue for Renovations*, NBC News (Sept. 15, 2026) (online at www.nbcnews.com/politics/trump-administration/trumps-handpicked-kennedy-center-board-votes-close-venue-renovations-rcna597921); *Trump Seen with “Kennedy Center Demolished” Poster as His Lawyers Tell Judges of Damage to Arts Building to Justify Closure*, CNN (Sept. 16, 2026) (online at www.cnn.com/2026/09/16/politics/is-the-kennedy-center-closed).

² *Kennedy Center Will Close for Renovations After Judge Blocks Returning Trump's Name to Building*, AP News (Sept. 15, 2026) (online at www.apnews.com/article/kennedy-center-closure-board-trump-ruling-1dfbfaac695f6817719477101b971a54); *Trump's Handpicked Kennedy Center Board Votes to Immediately Close Venue for Renovations*, NBC News (Sept. 15, 2026) (online at www.nbcnews.com/politics/trump-administration/trumps-handpicked-kennedy-center-board-votes-close-venue-renovations-rcna597921).

³ *Trump Seen with “Kennedy Center Demolished” Poster as His Lawyers Tell Judges of Damage to Arts Building to Justify Closure*, CNN (Sept. 16, 2026) (online at www.cnn.com/2026/09/16/politics/is-the-kennedy-center-closed).

advance notice of any planned demolitions.⁴ The preliminary injunction issued in May 2026 to prevent the Center from closing for a sudden renovation allowed for emergency repairs, but not demolition of the building.⁵ The Administration's claims that the Center must be closed for safety reasons are undermined by the fact that the safety consultants expressly disclaimed reaching that opinion.⁶

A Senate committee report examining the Center's contracts and expenses identified similar patterns of "self-dealing, favoritism, and waste," including more no-bid contracts for poor quality work that will similarly need to be redone.⁷ President Trump's interference at the Center has also resulted in costs beyond the price tag of adding and then removing his name from the building. On July 9, 2026, a whistleblower report to Congress detailed how a rush of shoddy construction work was performed ahead of key events, which staff warned would have to be redone.⁸ Since installing himself as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees and replacing a bipartisan board with his own appointees, ticket sales are down and many artists have cancelled plans to perform there.⁹ The President has also sued artists for not wanting to perform at the venue after he politicized it.¹⁰

The reputational harm to the Center cannot be overstated and will take years to reverse. After existing as a world-class venue for decades, President Trump and his allies have forced the Center into dire financial straits and now appear poised to destroy it entirely, all in service of a single man's ego.¹¹

center-closed).

⁴ Minute Order (Sept. 17, 2026), *Joyce Beatty v. Donald J. Trump, et al*, D.D.C. (No. 1:25-cv-04480-CRC) (online at www.courtlistener.com/docket/72069932/beatty-v-trump/).

⁵ *Kennedy Center Demolition Requires 30-Day Notice, Judge Rules*, Axios (Sept. 17, 2026) (online at www.axios.com/2026/09/17/kennedy-center-demolition-30-days-notice-ruling).

⁶ *Kennedy Center to Close as Trump Threatens to Block Repairs over Name Dispute*, The Guardian (Sept. 15, 2026) (online at <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/sep/15/trump-kennedy-center-renovations>).

⁷ *Senate Democrats Are Investigating Kennedy Center's Deals and Spending*, Washington Post (Nov. 20, 2025) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/style/2025/11/20/kennedy-center-senate-democrat-investigation-spending-deals/).

⁸ *Kennedy Center Filled with Shoddy Work as Officials Rushed to Renovate Venue in Trump Aesthetic, Whistleblowers Claim*, The Independent (July 14, 2026) (online at www.the-independent.com/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-kennedy-center-whistleblower-investigation-b3014943.html).

⁹ *Trump Says He Will Dismiss Kennedy Center Board Members and Install Himself as Chair*, New York Times (Feb. 7, 2025) (online at www.nytimes.com/2025/02/07/us/politics/trump-kennedy-center.html); *Kennedy Center Facing Financial Straits, Difficult Choices – And a Judge Who Wants it to Stay Open*, CNN (June 19, 2026) (online at www.cnn.com/2026/06/19/politics/kennedy-center-renovation-options-lawsuit-deadlines).

¹⁰ *Kennedy Center Loses Case Against Musician Who Canceled After Trump Renaming*, New York Times (June 6, 2026) (online at www.nytimes.com/2026/06/06/us/politics/kennedy-center-lawsuit-tossed-trump-chuck-redd.html).

¹¹ *Kennedy Center Facing Financial Straits, Difficult Choices – And a Judge Who Wants it to Stay Open*, CNN (June 19, 2026) (online at www.cnn.com/2026/06/19/politics/kennedy-center-renovation-options-lawsuit-deadlines); *Kennedy Center Says it Will Stay Open for Now, But is Not Booking New Shows*, Washington Post (June 19, 2026) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/style/2026/06/19/kennedy-center-says-it-will-stay-open-now-not).

To facilitate the Committee's investigation into the President's interference with the Center, we request the following documents and information by October 2, 2026:

1. All documents, records, and communications concerning all instances of safety hazards, disrepair, or "structural deterioration" since January 1, 2021;
2. All documented instances of safety warnings given to both staff employed by the Center and visiting members of the public;
3. The number of employees who would lose their jobs because of the demolition, including part-time employees and contractors;
4. The estimated costs of demolishing the Center, as well as all surveys, inspections, and reports conducted in support of potential renovations to the Center grounds and buildings;
5. All communications between Mr. Charles "Matt" Flocia and all members of the Board of Trustees concerning the potential closure or renovation of the Center.

In addition to the above documents, please provide a written answer to the following inquiry by October 2, 2026:

1. President Trump claimed that the Center is in a "virtual state of collapse."¹² However, he, the Vice President, and other senior members of the Administration have repeatedly attended events at the Center.¹³ Given the paramount importance of protecting the safety of government officials, particularly senior government officials, what warnings, if any, did the Center provide to officials who attended events at the Center?
 - a. Additionally, please provide the documentation confirming the dates and number of attendances by senior officials in the Trump Administration, including the President, Vice President, First and Second Lady, members of the Cabinet, those employed by the Executive Office of the President, and other political appointees.

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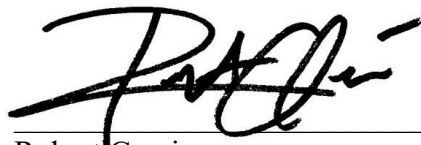
¹² *Trump Blasts Kennedy Center for Being in "Virtual State of Collapse"*, The Independent (Sept. 15, 2026) (online at www.independent.co.uk/bulletin/news/trump-kennedy-center-building-collapse-b3050747.html); see Declaration of Charles Matthew ("Matt") Flocia (Sept. 17, 2026), *Joyce Beatty v. Donald J. Trump, et al*, D.D.C. (No. 1:25-cv-04480-CRC) (online at <https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.dcd.287972/gov.uscourts.dcd.287972.60.1.pdf>).

¹³ White House, *Press Release: President Trump, First Lady Met with Standing Ovation at Kennedy Center* (June 12, 2025) (online at www.whitehouse.gov/releases/2025/06/president-trump-first-lady-met-with-standing-ovation-at-kennedy-center/); *Vice President Vance Gets Booed at The Kennedy Center*, NPR (Mar. 14, 2025) (online at www.npr.org/2025/03/14/nx-s1-5328234/jd-vance-boo-kennedy-center/); *Red Carpet at The Kennedy Center Honors*, Reuters (Dec. 8, 2025) (online at www.reuters.com/pictures/red-carpet-kennedy-center-honors-2025-12-08/5NHULGYC6VME5NQHKXDXJ3F3TI/).

Finally, I request that you immediately preserve all documents, communications, and other materials relevant to the matters described above. Please immediately confirm in writing your compliance in preserving records and communications, as well as providing a detailed catalog of all preserved records.

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

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