

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

October 21, 2025

The Honorable Russell Vought
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. Vought:

We write regarding the Trump Administration's illegal reductions in force (RIF) targeting thousands of federal employees during the current lapse in federal appropriations. On Wednesday, October 15, 2025, Judge Susan Illston ordered the Administration to halt mass firings while she considers claims made by several unions that these firings are illegal. In her ruling, she made clear that statements made by you and other members of the Trump Administration detailing intent to use firings of federal employees for political purposes and to target "Democrat agencies" are unacceptable, stating: "You can't do that in a nation of laws. We have laws here, and the things that are being articulated here are not within the law."¹ A lapse in appropriations grants you no power to fire workers or to purge the federal workforce. We demand that you immediately comply with Judge Illston's order, cease these illegal actions, rescind any RIF notices issued since the start of this shutdown, and provide documentary evidence of your compliance with the law.

On September 24, 2025, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued guidance encouraging federal agencies to prepare plans for mass firing in violation of federal law.² On October 14, 2025, the Administration represented in court filings that more than 4,000 federal workers had been fired at eight federal departments, and in many cases furloughed employees were called back to work to implement those firings.³ The continued implementation of this political purge during a government shutdown involves the violation of several laws and regulations, most notably the Anti-deficiency Act, which prohibits agencies from incurring new

¹ *US Judge Blocks Trump's Plan to Lay Off Thousands of Government Workers*, Reuters (Oct. 15, 2025) (online at www.reuters.com/world/us-judge-says-she-will-likely-block-trumps-mass-layoffs-during-government-2025-10-15/).

² See *White House to Agencies: Prepare Mass Firing Plans for a Potential Shutdown*, Politico (Sept. 24, 2025) (online at www.politico.com/news/2025/09/24/white-house-firings-shutdown-00579909); Memorandum from the Office of Management and Budget, obtained by Politico (online at www.politico.com/f/?id=00000199-7e8f-ddde-a199-fedf6c5d0000) (accessed Oct. 15, 2025).

³ Declaration of Stephen Billy, (Oct. 14, 2025), *AFGE v. U.S. Office of Management and Budget*, N.D. Cal. (No. 25-CV-08302). Agencies listed in the declaration as having implemented a RIF are the Environmental Protection Agency and the Departments of Commerce, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Homeland Security, and Treasury.

obligations during a lapse in appropriations.⁴

This Administration's actions plainly show that you and President Trump will continue to pursue this vindictive campaign to destroy critical services relied upon by the American people. These illegal firings or notices of potential future illegal firings include workers at the Environmental Protection Agency and the Departments of Commerce, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Homeland Security, and Treasury.⁵ Illegally fired civil servants at these agencies are responsible for administering a wide range of important programs established by Congress to improve the lives of Americans, including:

- The Department of Education reportedly laid off most of the employees in the Office of Special Education Programs, which has responsibilities related to implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.⁶ Experts, including from the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, expressed alarm about the impact of these RIFs on children with special needs and on the Department's ability to provide support for the implementation of the Act, which served about 8.4 million infants, toddlers, children, and young adults in 2023.⁷
- The Department of Health and Human Services laid off more than 1,700 employees, including at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, Epidemic Intelligence Service, and Public Health Infrastructure Center, the last of which manages grants to state and local government to build public health capacity.⁸ However, nearly half of these RIF notices were rescinded in the following days due to "data discrepancies and processing errors."⁹

⁴ See 5 U.S.C. § 3501-3504; 5 U.S.C. § 5595 (b); 5 C.F.R. § 351.801. See also, *Senior Government Officials Privately Warn Against Firings During Shutdown*, Washington Post (Oct. 2, 2025) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/10/02/shutdown-rifs-government-warnings/); Complaint, (Sept. 30, 2025) *AFGE v. U.S. Office of Management and Budget*, N.D. Cal. (No. 25-CV-08302).

⁵ Declaration of Stephen Billy, (Oct. 14, 2025), *AFGE v. U.S. Office of Management and Budget*, N.D. Cal. (No. 25-CV-08302).

⁶ *RIFs Rip Through Federal Office of Special Education Programs*, K-12 Dive (Oct. 12, 2025) (online at www.k12dive.com/news/special-education-OSEP-OSERS-federal-rifs-Government-shutdown/802662/); National Association of State Directors of Special Education, *Press Release: NASDSE Responds to Reported Staffing Reductions at the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services* (Oct. 13, 2025) (online at www.nasdse.org/docs/NASDE_-_RIF_Statement_.pdf).

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Breaking Down the Impact of Trump's Shutdown Layoffs of Federal Workers*, CNN (Oct. 15, 2025) (online at www.cnn.com/2025/10/14/politics/federal-worker-layoffs-government-shutdown).

⁹ Declaration of Thomas J. Nagy Jr., (Oct. 14, 2025), *AFGE v. U.S. Office of Management and Budget*, N.D. Cal. (No. 25-CV-08302).

- The Department of the Treasury fired more than 1,300 workers, reportedly including all staff from the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund.¹⁰ Reporting indicates that the Department intends to abolish the Fund, which was established by Congress to award federal dollars through partnerships with community banks to increase the accessibility of financial services and products in communities and markets traditionally underserved by the larger banking industry.¹¹
- The Department of Homeland Security has fired key employees at the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). These layoffs make the United States less safe by undermining CISA's relationships with state, local, and other partners on the ground protecting our most critical infrastructure. Instead of guarding vulnerable chemical facilities, for example, DHS is chasing debunked conspiracy theories and firing nonpartisan security professionals.¹²

The chaotic nature of these RIFs, the threats to violate the law to abandon the Administration's legal duty to provide furloughed employees with back pay after any government shutdown, and your own statements reveal the true goal of these efforts: to punish federal employees for their service to the nation and to destabilize federal agencies and the programs and laws they carry out—and to harm the American public.¹³

Agencies that carry out illegal mass firings undermine the functioning of the federal government and violate the trust of the American people in their nation's institutions. In light of this Administration's blatant disregard for the law and its seemingly insatiable hunger for unchecked power at the expense of critical programs that support the American people, and so that Congress may effectively carry out its constitutional oversight functions, we demand that you provide the following information and documents no later than November 4, 2025:

¹⁰ See, Declaration of Stephen Billy, (Oct. 14, 2025) *AFGE v. U.S. Office of Management and Budget*, N.D. Cal. (No. 25-CV-08302); and *GOP Senator Discouraged by Trump's Community Development Finance Firings*, Politico (Oct. 14, 2025) (online at www.politico.com/live-updates/2025/10/14/congress/gop-senators-discouraged-by-trumps-community-development-finance-firings-00608690).

¹¹ *Id.* and 12 U.S.C. § 4703.

¹² *Layoffs, Reassignments Further Deplete CISA*, Cybersecurity Dive (Oct. 14, 2025) (online at www.cybersecuritydive.com/news/cisa-layoffs-reassignments-dhs-white-house-government-shutdown/802723/).

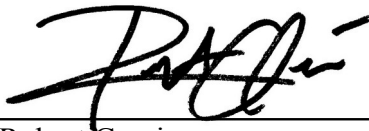
¹³ See, e.g., President Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Truth Social (Oct. 2, 2025) (online at <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/115304455138824245>) (accessed Oct. 2, 2025); *White House Pushes For More Firings As Judge Blocks Shutdown Layoffs*, Axios (Oct. 15, 2025) (online at www.axios.com/2025/10/15/federal-layoffs-russell-vought-government-shutdown?stream=politics&utm_source=alert&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=alerts_politics); *'Pain on the Bureaucracy': Russ Vought's Crusade Upends the Shutdown Fight*, Politico (Sep. 26, 2025) (online at www.politico.com/news/2025/09/26/russ-vought-shutdown-layoffs-00581412); *White House to Agencies: Prepare Mass Firing Plans for A Potential Shutdown*, Politico (Sep. 24, 2025) (online at www.politico.com/news/2025/09/24/white-house-firings-shutdown-00579909); and *Trump Just Threatened to Deny Furloughed Feds' Backpay. That's Illegal.*, MSNBC (Oct. 8, 2025) (online at www.msnbc.com/opinion/msnbc-opinion/trump-shutdown-back-pay-federal-employees-rcna236163).

1. Documents and communications demonstrating your compliance with Judge Illston's October 15 order, including communications from OMB to executive branch agencies relaying the order and communicating guidance for implementing it;
2. All documents and communications, including a comprehensive description, related to the process and criteria by which OMB reviewed and analyzed agency plans for RIFs, whether those plans were developed in response to OMB's February 26, 2025, request for agency RIF and reorganization plans or more recent requests for RIF plans in connection with a potential lapse in appropriations;¹⁴
3. All documents and communications related to OMB and agency analysis demonstrating that all statutorily required programs and functions will be successfully executed in light of the RIFs;
4. All documents and communications related to any proposed RIF, whether related to the February 26 OPM/OMB memo or specifically related to the government shutdown beginning on October 1, 2025;
5. All documents and communications, including a complete timeline, related to RIF notices issued to federal employees after September 30, 2025;
6. All documents and communications related to the development and approval of suggested out of office replies, webpage notices, or other public-facing shutdown notifications; and
7. All documents and communications, including agency RIF and reorganization plans, related to proposed RIFs of federal employees.

If you have any questions about this request, please contact Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Democratic staff at (202) 225-5051. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

¹⁴ See, Memorandum from Russell T. Vought, Director, Office of Management and Budget and Charles Ezell, Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management to Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies (Feb. 26, 2025) (online at www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/latest-memos/guidance-on-agency-rif-and-reorganization-plans-requested-by-implementing-the-president-s-department-of-government-efficiency-workforce-optimization-initiative.pdf); and *White House to Agencies: Prepare Mass Firing Plans for A Potential Shutdown*, Politico (Sep. 24, 2025) (online at www.politico.com/news/2025/09/24/white-house-firings-shutdown-00579909).

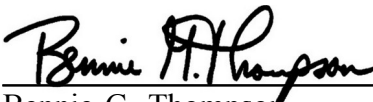
Sincerely,



Robert Garcia
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and
Government Reform



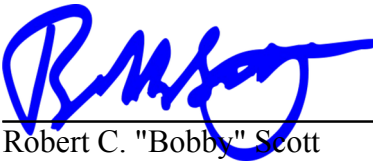
Zoe Lofgren
Ranking Member
Committee on Science,
Space, and Technology




Bennie G. Thompson
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland
Security



James P. McGovern
Ranking Member
Committee on Rules



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Ranking Member
Committee on Education
and Workforce



Mark Takano
Ranking Member
Committee on Veterans'
Affairs



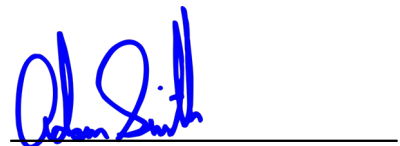
Maxine Waters
Ranking Member
Committee on Financial
Services




Joseph D. Morelle
Ranking Member
Committee on House
Administration



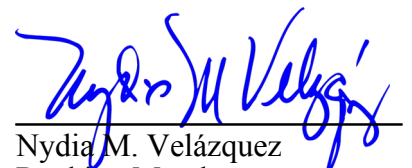
Angie Craig
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture




Adam Smith
Ranking Member
Armed Services Committee



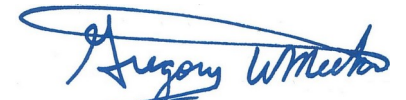
James A. Himes
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Permanent Select
Committee on Intelligence




Nydia M. Velázquez
Ranking Member
Committee on Small Business




Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and
Commerce



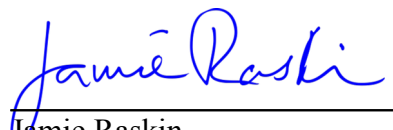
Gregory W. Meeks
Ranking Member
Committee on Foreign
Affairs




Raja Krishnamoorthi
Ranking Member
Select Committee on
Strategic Competition
Between the United States
and the Chinese Communist
Party



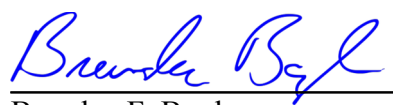
Jared Huffman
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural
Resources




Jamie Raskin
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary



Rosa L. DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations



Brendan F. Boyle
Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget



Rick Larsen
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation &
Infrastructure

The Honorable Russell Vought
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A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Richard E. Neal", positioned above a horizontal line.

Richard E. Neal
Ranking Member
Committee on Ways and
Means

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