

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 23, 2025

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write regarding the construction of a new \$250 million ballroom reportedly underway at the White House complex during the ongoing government shutdown, including the demolition of portions of the historic East Wing. These developments raise serious concerns about transparency, funding priorities, the physical integrity of the White House, and the ethical integrity of the Administration it houses.

This project represents one of the most substantial alterations to the White House in modern history. The decisions were made in complete secrecy and undertaken without public disclosure or proper consultation. The National Capital Planning Commission, which has an important oversight role over the construction, is “closed during the federal government shutdown,”¹ calling into question whether the Commission provided any substantive input on proposed construction. The Treasury Department reportedly told employees not to share photos of the construction.² In July, you said “It won’t interfere with the current building. It won’t be. It’ll be near it but not touching it.”³ As we now know, this was a lie, as the entire East Wing is set to be demolished.⁴

This demolition of an iconic symbol of a democracy run of, by, and for the people is slated to be funded by major donations from billionaires and corporations. Donations were discussed at an elaborate dinner at the White House, where donors feasted on “tomato salad, Beef Wellington, and butterscotch ice cream with a pear jam-filled meringue.”⁵ But outside the gates, millions of Americans are about to lose their health care and the SNAP benefits that help put food on the table,

¹ National Capital Planning Commission. <https://www.ncpc.gov/default.html>

² Andrews, Natalie and Leary, Alex. “Treasury Tells Employees Not to Share Photos of White House Ballroom Construction.” Wall Street Journal. October 21, 2025. <https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/treasury-tells-employees-not-to-share-photos-of-white-house-ballroom-construction-1d4f2c49?>

³ Esposito, Joey. “Trump said new White House ballroom construction wouldn’t ‘interfere with the current building.’” Snopes. October 21, 2025. <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/trump-white-house-ballroom-construction/>

⁴ Diamond, Dan, Edwards, J., Linke, M., and Meko, T. “White House expands East Wing demolition as critics decry Trump overreach.” Washington Post. October 21, 2025. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/10/21/white-house-continues-east-wing-demolition-amid-cries-trump-overreach/>

⁵ Farhi, Arden and Jacobs, Jennifer. “Trump looks to cement his architectural legacy as Democrats bristle.” CBS News. October 17, 2025. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-looks-to-cement-his-architectural-legacy-as-democrats-bristle/>

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and millions more will forego another paycheck because of the Republican refusal to end the shutdown.

Please provide the following documents regarding the demolition of any part of the existing White House and construction of the new White House ballroom (“project”) no later than November 6, 2025:

1. All documents and communications between the White House and any of the following: the Office of Management and Budget, General Services Administration, National Park Service, Secret Service, Committee for the Preservation of the White House, White House Historical Association, National Capital Planning Commission, Commission on Fine Arts, Trust for the National Mall, and any and all outside contractors regarding demolition of any part of the project during the ongoing government shutdown;
2. Architectural plans, environmental assessments, and historical preservation reviews related to this project;
3. A list of entities that were consulted regarding historic preservation before proceeding with the demolition of the East Wing;
4. All documents and communications pertaining to awarding contracts related to the project, including any competitive bids that were considered and the final contracts for this project;
5. A detailed budget for the project;
6. Any legal opinions or memoranda regarding the Administration’s authority to proceed with the project during a shutdown;
7. A list of federal employees that were designated as “essential,” “excepted,” or “exempt” to work on the project during the lapse in appropriations, and their agency, department, title, and role in the project;
8. A list of all legal authorities invoked to allow the project to begin during a lapse in appropriations;
9. A list of all donors, the amounts donated, and, if applicable, any and all access, service, or decision by the federal government that they expect in return;
10. Any agreement signed by donors in exchange for their donation; and
11. A list of all federal funding sources being used for the project, and their amounts.

In addition, please provide a briefing on this matter by November 6, 2025.

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The American people deserve full transparency regarding the substantial demolition, preparation, and construction at the White House during a government shutdown, particularly when it concerns alterations to one of our nation's most historically significant buildings.

The House Natural Resources Committee has jurisdiction over public lands generally, parks within the District of Columbia, and the erection of monuments to the memory of individuals under House Rule X(m). 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 Oversight Committee Democratic staff at (202) 225-5051 or Natural Resources Committee staff at (202) 225-6065. Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress
Ranking Member,
Committee on Natural Resources



Robert Garcia
Member of Congress
Ranking Member,
Committee on Oversight and Government
Reform



Yassamin Ansari
Member of Congress
Ranking Member,
Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources