

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 20, 2025

The Honorable Scott Turner  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
451 7<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Secretary Turner:

We write regarding your recent announcement that you have launched a “Department of Government Efficiency” (DOGE) Task Force at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)<sup>1</sup> and your statement indicating that DOGE has identified \$260 million in wasteful contracts at HUD.<sup>2</sup> We are also seeking additional information about alarming reports of HUD’s plans to cancel a program serving families, seniors, and people with disabilities and fire half of its workforce.<sup>3</sup> To address these questions, we request information about DOGE’s involvement at HUD, and the impact it is having on HUD funding and staffing needed to implement its mission.

HUD engages in critical work supporting communities in expanding their housing supply, providing rental assistance, and preventing homelessness—work that is urgently important for millions of Americans looking to purchase a home to build generational wealth or find an affordable place to rent.

According to public reports, HUD plans to lay off 50 percent of its workforce.<sup>4</sup> These cuts would eliminate half of HUD’s field offices serving local communities across the country and gut the offices of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO), Policy Development and Research (PD&R), and Community Planning and Development (CPD), which protect families and people with disabilities from discrimination, address our homelessness crisis, and provide resources to communities to tackle our housing shortage and recover from disasters.<sup>5</sup> Axing these offices will

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<sup>1</sup> Tweet by Scott Turner, February 13, 2025, <https://x.com/SecretaryTurner/status/1890117833914261581>.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, “HUD Secretary Scott Turner Launches DOGE Task Force to Eliminate Waste, Fraud and Abuse,” press release, February 13, 2025, [https://www.hud.gov/press/press\\_releases\\_media\\_advisories/hud\\_no\\_25\\_030](https://www.hud.gov/press/press_releases_media_advisories/hud_no_25_030).

<sup>3</sup> NPR, “HUD employees are bracing for what they hear will be ‘drastic’ staff cuts,” Jennifer Ludden, February 14, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/14/g-s1-49177/hud-employees-are-bracing-for-what-they-hear-will-be-drastic-staff-cuts>.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> Politico, “DOGE discussing Housing layoffs,” Mohar Chatterjee, Sophia Cai, and Sam Sutton, February 14, 2025, <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/02/14/doge-housing-department-layoffs-00204372>.

handicap the Department's ability to serve the American public and exacerbate the housing crisis we currently find ourselves in.

In addition to personnel cuts, you also announced that HUD and DOGE have identified \$260 million in savings on wasteful contracts.<sup>6</sup> If this represents legitimate waste, we are happy to work with you to wipe it out. But to date, there has been no transparency about DOGE's involvement, or what exactly it is finding. We ask that you provide additional information on the allegedly wasteful spending identified by DOGE, and a clear accounting of how these funds have been misused. This is particularly important because, even before implementing any cuts, HUD's DOGE Task Force is already interfering with the department's future planning and funding which is critical to boosting our nation's housing supply. Public reporting suggests that DOGE's request for information on HUD's contracts has put all "future funding grants [...] effectively on pause."<sup>7</sup>

Further, reports indicate HUD is now terminating the Green and Resilient Retrofit Program, which was provided by Congress to help repair and improve efficiency in homes for families, seniors, and people with disabilities.<sup>8</sup> These funds have already been awarded and obligated to nonprofits and other housing providers to improve more than 30,000 homes all across the country.<sup>9</sup> But now, HUD is trying to claw these funds back, cancelling signed contracts and breaking its word to residents and owners. Not only is this bad faith, but it also cuts a program that will reduce operating costs and protect families and seniors from the effects of disasters. Without these funds or continued trust in HUD as a reliable partner, some properties in dire need of rehabilitation may opt out of the program and be permanently lost from our country's already limited stock of affordable housing, in red and blue states alike.

DOGE's actions thus far at other agencies have caused widespread chaos, hampered the ability of agencies to do their work, and provided potentially illegal data access to individuals with conflicts of interest.<sup>10</sup> There is no indication that DOGE's work at HUD will be any less detrimental.

During your testimony in front of the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, you spoke about empowering HUD employees and serving HUD's mission "to create strong and sustainable communities and support quality affordable homes — serving the most vulnerable of our nation."<sup>11</sup> It is not clear how laying off half its staff serves HUD's mission, or whether the \$260 million figure you referred to in your interview represents legitimate waste and

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<sup>6</sup> Tweet by Scott Turner, February 11, <https://x.com/SecretaryTurner/status/1889463406123425991>.

<sup>7</sup> NPR, "HUD is bracing as DOGE seeks to cut waste, fraud. Union leaders have a suggestion," Jennifer Ludden, February 11, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/11/g-s1-48297/doge-hud-trump-funding-cuts-housing-urban-development>.

<sup>8</sup> NPR, "HUD employees are bracing for what they hear will be 'drastic' staff cuts," Jennifer Ludden, February 14, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/14/g-s1-49177/hud-employees-are-bracing-for-what-they-hear-will-be-drastic-staff-cuts>.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "Fact Sheet: Biden-Harris Administration Makes Investments in Affordable Housing Over Past Four Years," January 15, 2025, [https://web.archive.org/web/20250116195944/https://www.hud.gov/press/press\\_releases\\_media\\_advisories/hud\\_no\\_25\\_018](https://web.archive.org/web/20250116195944/https://www.hud.gov/press/press_releases_media_advisories/hud_no_25_018).

<sup>10</sup> The Verge, "Trump administration illegally allowed DOGE to access workers' data, lawsuit alleges," Lauren Feiner, February 11, 2025, <https://www.theverge.com/news/609990/eff-doge-privacy-lawsuit-opm-trump-musk>.

abuse. As HUD Secretary, it is your job to ensure that the millions of Americans who rely on HUD can continue to do so without DOGE's interference.

As members of the Senate who have authorized and funded HUD's programs and are responsible for its oversight, it is critical that we understand the scope of DOGE's activities at HUD. We request that you answer the following questions by February 26, 2025:

1. How many individuals are currently part of HUD's DOGE Task Force? Please provide the names of all Task Force members and whether they are considered employees of HUD or any other federal agency.
2. What are the specific components of the \$260 million in contracts that you described in your February 11, 2025, interview on The Charlie Kirk Show?<sup>12</sup> Please provide a list of all contracts that DOGE employees have identified as wasteful and the justification for cancellation.
3. Do members of the DOGE Task Force have access to any non-public HUD information, including data systems, contracting systems, personnel records, or other legal records? Does this include proprietary Tribal enrollment data submitted for Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA) funding?
4. What steps have you taken to protect Americans' data and ensure compliance with the Privacy Act?
5. What are the objectives of the HUD DOGE Task Force and how long will the Task Force be in place?
6. Has there been any pause or delay in disbursing or obligating HUD funds, including delays in signing grant agreements, since January 20, 2025? Please provide a detailed accounting of any pauses or delays.
7. Has HUD cancelled – or does HUD intend to cancel – the Green and Resilient Retrofit Program, including terminating or failing to enter into awards or contracts?
8. Please explain in detail any plans to reduce HUD staffing below the level of staff employed at the agency on January 20, 2025, including:
  - a. Current or planned changes in staffing by HUD Office and the reason for any change, including retirement, participation in a Deferred Resignation Program, or other actions;
  - b. The number of staff that would be present in each HUD Office after planned changes; and
  - c. Whether any programs or functions of HUD would be reduced or eliminated.

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<sup>11</sup> Written testimony of Scott Turner to the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, January 16, 2025, [https://www.banking.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/turner\\_testimony\\_1-16-25.pdf](https://www.banking.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/turner_testimony_1-16-25.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "ICYMI | Secretary Scott Turner on The Charlie Kirk Show," press release, February 13, 2025, [https://www.hud.gov/press/press\\_releases\\_media\\_advisories/hud\\_no\\_25\\_029](https://www.hud.gov/press/press_releases_media_advisories/hud_no_25_029).

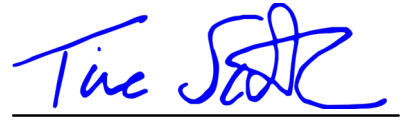
9. Are there any programs, functions, or offices you plan to eliminate at HUD? If so, please provide a list of those programs, functions, or offices. If not, please detail how you intend to perform HUD's critical functions and prevent mismanagement of funds with the proposed staff reductions.

As DOGE's work is already affecting HUD programs and personnel, it is critical that Congress, which funds and oversees HUD activities, understands the full scope of DOGE's work within HUD immediately. Thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent matter.

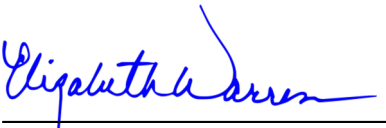
Sincerely,



Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



Tina Smith  
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Banking,  
Housing, and Urban Affairs



Jack Reed  
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator

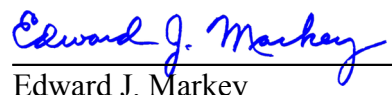



Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator

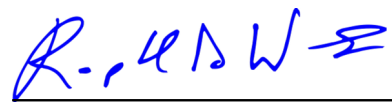



Alex Padilla  
United States Senator


  
Patty Murray  
United States Senator

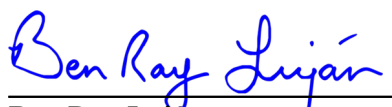
  
Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

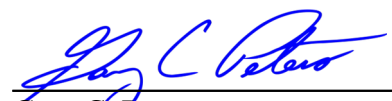
  
Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator


  
Raphael Warnock  
United States Senator

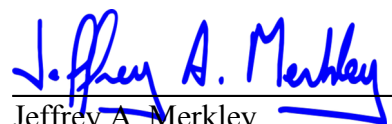
  
Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator

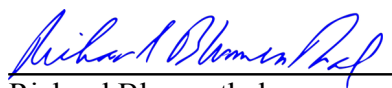
  
Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator


  
Ben Ray Lujan  
United States Senator

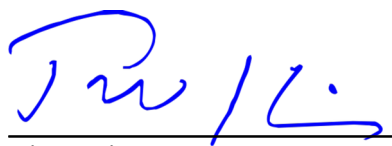
  
Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator


  
Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator

  
Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator

  
Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator

  
Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator

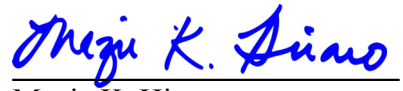
  
Tim Kaine  
United States Senator

  
Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



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Ruben Gallego  
United States Senator



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Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator