

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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<http://oversight.house.gov>

February 23, 2018

The Honorable David P. Pekoske
Administrator
Transportation Security Administration
601 South 12th Street
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Mr. Pekoske:

Documents obtained by the Committee show the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) Office of Professional Responsibility recommended Joseph Salvator, a TSA Senior Executive, be terminated. The recommendation was based on a finding that the Senior Executive engaged in inappropriate and unprofessional conduct and exhibited a lack of candor and poor judgment.¹ However, Salvator was not dismissed. Instead, within an hour of giving him a Notice of Proposed Removal, TSA officials presented him a proposed settlement agreement that significantly reduced the disciplinary penalty he would face.² Ultimately, Salvator's settlement agreement reduced his grade, but did not reduce his pay.³ After learning about TSA's handling of the disciplinary process, the Committee sent a letter to then-TSA Administrator Peter Neffenger requesting an independent review.⁴

The Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General (DHS OIG) conducted a review of this matter in response to the Committee's letter. In its January 8, 2018, report, the DHS OIG found "TSA senior leaders deviated from standard policy and practice in a number of key respects indicating that [Salvator] received unusually favorable treatment in the resolution of his disciplinary matter."⁵ DHS OIG also found current and former TSA officials, including TSA's Chief Counsel Francine Kerner, "interfered with the disciplinary process in a way that circumvented the very TSA policies and procedures that were established to prevent favoritism in such circumstances."⁶

This raises significant concerns about how TSA addresses employee misconduct and discipline, especially for cases involving senior officials. As the DHS OIG noted, "employing a

¹ Notice of Proposed Removal from Donna M. Rachuba, Unit Chief, Off. of Prof. Resp., Transp. Sec. Admin., to Joseph Salvator, Ass't Admin., Off. of Intelligence Analysis, Transp. Sec. Admin. (June 15, 2015).

² H. Comm. on Oversight & Gov't Reform, Transcribed Interview of Joe Salvator, Tr. at 255 (Apr. 15, 2016).

³ Settlement Agreement and Release Between Joseph Salvator, Ass't Admin., Off. of Intelligence Analysis, Transp. Sec. Admin., and the Transp. Sec. Admin.

⁴ Letter from Hon. Jason Chaffetz, Chairman, and Hon. Elijah E. Cummings, Ranking Member, H. Comm. on Oversight & Gov't Reform to Hon. Peter Neffenger, Admin., Transp. Sec. Admin. (Apr. 26, 2016).

⁵ DEPT. OF HOMELAND SEC. OFF. OF INSP. GEN., SPECIAL REVIEW: TSA'S HANDLING OF THE 2015 DISCIPLINARY MATTER INVOLVING TSES EMPLOYEE 16 (OIG-18-35) (Jan. 8, 2018).

⁶ *Id.*

shadow disciplinary process for senior management fuels complaints about unjustly favorable treatment for high-level employees.”⁷ Over the course of its investigation, the Committee has become aware of other allegations in which senior TSA officials engaged in serious misconduct yet often faced few no consequences.

To assist the Committee’s oversight of this matter, please provide the following documents and information:

1. A list of all actions TSA has taken or is taking in response to DHS OIG’s review of TSA’s Handling of the 2015 Disciplinary Matter Involving TSA Employee;
2. Any Report of Investigation (ROI) produced by the Office of Investigations since January 1, 2015, that found misconduct by any political appointee, TSES employee, Federal Security Director, or Assistant Federal Security Director at TSA;
3. All documents and communications referring or relating to any ROI responsive to item 3 including but not limited to:
 - a. All documents associated with the disciplinary process conducted by TSA in response to the ROI;
 - b. All communications involving the TSA Administrator, Deputy Administrator, or any employee of the Office of Chief Counsel referring or relating to the ROI or an associated disciplinary process;
4. All documents and communications referring or relating to any allegation of, investigation into, or finding of misconduct or impropriety; or referring or relating to disciplinary determination involving the following any of the following individuals:
 - a. Mark Fedorko;
 - b. Christine Halfacre;
 - c. Lee Kair;
 - d. Robin Kane;
 - e. Victoria Newhouse; and
 - f. Cliff Van Leuven.

Provide the requested documents and information as soon as possible, but no later than 5:00 p.m. on March 9, 2018. An attachment to this letter provides additional instructions for responding to the Committee’s request.

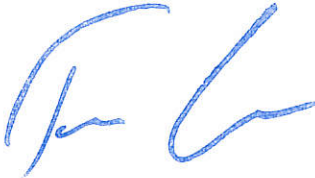
⁷ *Id.*

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Please contact Ari Wisch of the majority staff at (202) 225-5074 and Lucinda Lessley of the minority staff at (202) 225-5051 with any questions about this request. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Trey Gowdy'.

Trey Gowdy

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Elijah E. Cummings'.

Elijah E. Cummings

Enclosure

Responding to Committee Document Requests

1. In complying with this request, you are required to produce all responsive documents that are in your possession, custody, or control, whether held by you or your past or present agents, employees, and representatives acting on your behalf. You should also produce documents that you have a legal right to obtain, that you have a right to copy or to which you have access, as well as documents that you have placed in the temporary possession, custody, or control of any third party. Requested records, documents, data or information should not be destroyed, modified, removed, transferred or otherwise made inaccessible to the Committee.
2. In the event that any entity, organization or individual denoted in this request has been, or is also known by any other name than that herein denoted, the request shall be read also to include that alternative identification.
3. The Committee's preference is to receive documents in electronic form (i.e., CD, memory stick, or thumb drive) in lieu of paper productions.
4. Documents produced in electronic format should also be organized, identified, and indexed electronically.
5. Electronic document productions should be prepared according to the following standards:
 - (a) The production should consist of single page Tagged Image File ("TIF"), files accompanied by a Concordance-format load file, an Opticon reference file, and a file defining the fields and character lengths of the load file.
 - (b) Document numbers in the load file should match document Bates numbers and TIF file names.
 - (c) If the production is completed through a series of multiple partial productions, field names and file order in all load files should match.
 - (d) All electronic documents produced to the Committee should include the following fields of metadata specific to each document;

BEGDOC, ENDDOC, TEXT, BEGATTACH, ENDATTACH,
PAGECOUNT, CUSTODIAN, RECORDTYPE, DATE, TIME, SENTDATE,
SENTTIME, BEGINDATE, BEGINTIME, ENDDATE, ENDTIME, AUTHOR, FROM,
CC, TO, BCC, SUBJECT, TITLE, FILENAME, FILEEXT, FILESIZE,
DATECREATED, TIMECREATED, DATELASTMOD, TIMELASTMOD,
INTMSGID, INTMSGHEADER, NATIVELINK, INTFILPATH, EXCEPTION,
BEGATTACH.
6. Documents produced to the Committee should include an index describing the contents of the production. To the extent more than one CD, hard drive, memory stick, thumb drive, box or folder is produced, each CD, hard drive, memory stick, thumb drive, box or folder should contain an index describing its contents.

7. Documents produced in response to this request shall be produced together with copies of file labels, dividers or identifying markers with which they were associated when the request was served.
8. When you produce documents, you should identify the paragraph in the Committee's schedule to which the documents respond.
9. It shall not be a basis for refusal to produce documents that any other person or entity also possesses non-identical or identical copies of the same documents.
10. If any of the requested information is only reasonably available in machine-readable form (such as on a computer server, hard drive, or computer backup tape), you should consult with the Committee staff to determine the appropriate format in which to produce the information.
11. If compliance with the request cannot be made in full by the specified return date, compliance shall be made to the extent possible by that date. An explanation of why full compliance is not possible shall be provided along with any partial production.
12. In the event that a document is withheld on the basis of privilege, provide a privilege log containing the following information concerning any such document: (a) the privilege asserted; (b) the type of document; (c) the general subject matter; (d) the date, author and addressee; and (e) the relationship of the author and addressee to each other.
13. If any document responsive to this request was, but no longer is, in your possession, custody, or control, identify the document (stating its date, author, subject and recipients) and explain the circumstances under which the document ceased to be in your possession, custody, or control.
14. If a date or other descriptive detail set forth in this request referring to a document is inaccurate, but the actual date or other descriptive detail is known to you or is otherwise apparent from the context of the request, you are required to produce all documents which would be responsive as if the date or other descriptive detail were correct.
15. Unless otherwise specified, the time period covered by this request is from January 1, 2009 to the present.
16. This request is continuing in nature and applies to any newly-discovered information. Any record, document, compilation of data or information, not produced because it has not been located or discovered by the return date, shall be produced immediately upon subsequent location or discovery.
17. All documents shall be Bates-stamped sequentially and produced sequentially.
18. Two sets of documents shall be delivered, one set to the Majority Staff and one set to the Minority Staff. When documents are produced to the Committee, production sets shall be delivered to the Majority Staff in Room 2157 of the Rayburn House Office Building and the Minority Staff in Room 2471 of the Rayburn House Office Building.

19. Upon completion of the document production, you should submit a written certification, signed by you or your counsel, stating that: (1) a diligent search has been completed of all documents in your possession, custody, or control which reasonably could contain responsive documents; and (2) all documents located during the search that are responsive have been produced to the Committee.

Definitions

1. The term “document” means any written, recorded, or graphic matter of any nature whatsoever, regardless of how recorded, and whether original or copy, including, but not limited to, the following: memoranda, reports, expense reports, books, manuals, instructions, financial reports, working papers, records, notes, letters, notices, confirmations, telegrams, receipts, appraisals, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, prospectuses, inter-office and intra-office communications, electronic mail (e-mail), contracts, cables, notations of any type of conversation, telephone call, meeting or other communication, bulletins, printed matter, computer printouts, teletypes, invoices, transcripts, diaries, analyses, returns, summaries, minutes, bills, accounts, estimates, projections, comparisons, messages, correspondence, press releases, circulars, financial statements, reviews, opinions, offers, studies and investigations, questionnaires and surveys, and work sheets (and all drafts, preliminary versions, alterations, modifications, revisions, changes, and amendments of any of the foregoing, as well as any attachments or appendices thereto), and graphic or oral records or representations of any kind (including without limitation, photographs, charts, graphs, microfiche, microfilm, videotape, recordings and motion pictures), and electronic, mechanical, and electric records or representations of any kind (including, without limitation, tapes, cassettes, disks, and recordings) and other written, printed, typed, or other graphic or recorded matter of any kind or nature, however produced or reproduced, and whether preserved in writing, film, tape, disk, videotape or otherwise. A document bearing any notation not a part of the original text is to be considered a separate document. A draft or non-identical copy is a separate document within the meaning of this term.
2. The term “communication” means each manner or means of disclosure or exchange of information, regardless of means utilized, whether oral, electronic, by document or otherwise, and whether in a meeting, by telephone, facsimile, email (desktop or mobile device), text message, instant message, MMS or SMS message, regular mail, telexes, releases, or otherwise.
3. The terms “and” and “or” shall be construed broadly and either conjunctively or disjunctively to bring within the scope of this request any information which might otherwise be construed to be outside its scope. The singular includes plural number, and vice versa. The masculine includes the feminine and neuter genders.
4. The terms “person” or “persons” mean natural persons, firms, partnerships, associations, corporations, subsidiaries, divisions, departments, joint ventures, proprietorships, syndicates, or other legal, business or government entities, and all subsidiaries, affiliates, divisions, departments, branches, or other units thereof.

5. The term “identify,” when used in a question about individuals, means to provide the following information: (a) the individual's complete name and title; and (b) the individual's business address and phone number.
6. The term “referring or relating,” with respect to any given subject, means anything that constitutes, contains, embodies, reflects, identifies, states, refers to, deals with or is pertinent to that subject in any manner whatsoever.
7. The term “employee” means agent, borrowed employee, casual employee, consultant, contractor, de facto employee, independent contractor, joint adventurer, loaned employee, part-time employee, permanent employee, provisional employee, subcontractor, or any other type of service provider.