

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5051  
MINORITY (202) 225-5074  
<https://oversight.house.gov>

April 29, 2022

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

We write to conduct oversight over the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) newly created "Disinformation Governance Board" and continued efforts within the Biden Administration to suppress free speech and discredit legitimate criticism as misinformation. High-level Administration officials have perpetuated demonstrably false claims, including promoting the false narrative that the Hunter Biden laptop story was Russian disinformation<sup>1</sup> and that Border Patrol Agents were whipping Haitian migrants.<sup>2</sup> Rather than correct its false narratives and focus on the serious threats facing the homeland—including the crisis on our southern border—the Administration continues to falsely accuse political opponents of spreading misinformation. In most circumstances, the Administration's definition of "misinformation" is any fact or opinion that is critical of its abysmal policies and decisions. The United States' internal security apparatus must serve to protect the American people from threats to the homeland, not be weaponized by an unpopular President to push false narratives and discredit lawful discourse.

DHS is creating the Orwellian-named "Disinformation Governance Board" with a mission of "coordinat[ing] countering misinformation related to homeland security, focused specifically on irregular migration and Russia."<sup>3</sup> Nina Jankowicz, a former Fulbright-Clinton Public Policy Fellow, has been tapped to lead the board as its Executive Director.<sup>4</sup> Ms. Jankowicz recently derided defenders of the First Amendment as "free speech absolutists" engaged in "abuse" against "marginalized communities,"<sup>5</sup> promoted the work of Christopher

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<sup>1</sup> Jen Psaki (@jrpsaki), Twitter (Oct. 19, 2020, 10:45pm) *available at* <https://twitter.com/jrpsaki/status/1318382779659411458> ("Hunter Biden story is Russian disinfo, dozens of former intel officials say").

<sup>2</sup> Liptak, Kevin & Kate Sullivan, *Biden and Harris harshly condemn horseback wrangling depicted in images from US-Mexico Border*, CNN NEWS (Sept. 24, 2021).

<sup>3</sup> Daniels, Eugene, Rachael Bade & Ryan Lizza, *Fauci pulls out of WHCD. Is Biden next?*, POLITICO PLAYBOOK (Apr. 27, 2022).

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

<sup>5</sup> Nina Jankowicz (@wiczipedia), Twitter (Apr. 25, 2022, 1:29pm) *available at* <https://twitter.com/wiczipedia/status/1518643449225953287> ("Last week I told @NPRMichel: I shudder to think

Steele, the author of the widely discredited Steele dossier whose main sources were exposed as criminals,<sup>6</sup> and promoted the false narrative that the Hunter Biden laptop story was Russian disinformation.<sup>7</sup> Her public comments indicate that she is a partisan; neither a defender of the First Amendment, nor possessing instincts that would make her a credible arbiter of truth. Her many public statements undermining First Amendment freedoms further call into question the purpose of the “Disinformation Governance Board,” and signal that it is likely being set up to provide political cover for an unpopular Administration and to launder political attacks against its opponents.

It is no surprise the Administration is not pleased that the consequences of its disastrous policy decisions have led to unfavorable media coverage and the loss of the American people’s trust. The haphazard and poorly planned withdrawal from Afghanistan, rampant inflation, and the crisis on the border are difficult to hide. The creation of the “Disinformation Governance Board” appears to double down on this Administration’s continued abuse of taxpayer dollars and the federal government’s powers to attack Americans who disagree with its policies, smearing them as extremists and perpetrators of “mis- dis- and mal-information.”<sup>8</sup> Whether maligning opponents of the Administration’s COVID-19 vaccine and mask mandates as “domestic violent extremists,”<sup>9</sup> or smearing parents concerned with ensuring their children receive a quality, in-person education as domestic terrorists,<sup>10</sup> the Administration appears dead-set on suppressing opinions in opposition to its radical agenda.

It comes as no surprise that the “Disinformation Governance Board” will begin to focus on promoting the Administration’s narrative around “irregular migration,” likely promoting the demonstrably false claim repeated constantly by senior Administration officials that the Administration is creating a “safe, orderly, and humane immigration system.”<sup>11</sup> In fact, the Administration has already been caught trying to prevent unfavorable media coverage of the border crisis by banning media drones during a surge in Del Rio, Texas last year.<sup>12</sup> Instead of laundering the facts of the border crisis—which is anything but “safe, orderly, and humane”—through a lens of Administration-approved talking points, DHS political leadership should cease

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about if free speech absolutists were taking over more platforms, what that would look like for the marginalized communities...which are already shouldering...disproportionate amounts of this abuse.”)

<sup>6</sup> Dunleavy, Jerry, *Biden’s ‘disinformation’ chief Trump dossier author fan and Hunter Biden laptop doubter*, WASH. EXAMINER (Apr. 28, 2022).

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> See National Terrorism Advisory System Bulletin, U.S. Dep’t of Homeland Security (Feb. 7, 2022).

<sup>9</sup> See *id.* (“Meanwhile, COVID-19 mitigation measures – particularly COVID-19 vaccine and mask mandates – have been used by domestic violent extremists to justify violence since 2020 and could continue to inspire these extremists to target government, healthcare, and academic institutions that they associate with these measures.”)

<sup>10</sup> See Memorandum for Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, et. al. from Merrick B. Garland, Attorney General re *Partnership among Federal, State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Law Enforcement to Address Threats Against School Administrators, Board Members, Teachers, and Staff* (Oct. 4, 2021).

<sup>11</sup> See Memorandum for Interested Parties from Alejandro N. Mayorkas, Secretary, Dep’t of Homeland Security re: DHS Plan for Southwest Border Security and Preparedness (Apr. 26, 2022) (“Under the Biden-Harris Administration, the Department of Homeland Security... has been executing a comprehensive and deliberate strategy to secure our borders and build a safe, orderly, and humane immigration system.”).

<sup>12</sup> See Letter from James Comer, Rankin Member, H. Comm. on Oversight & Reform to Steve Dickson, Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration, (Sept. 21, 2021).

Secretary Mayorkas

April 29, 2022

Page 3 of 5


their efforts to cater to radical open-borders advocates and their allies, and instead work to implement policies that will actually solve the crisis.

To assist Republicans on the Committee on Oversight and Reform in conducting oversight over the conversion of DHS's resources into a political advocacy arm of the Biden campaign, as well as the potential implications for freedom of speech in our country, please provide the following documents and information, no later than May 13, 2022:

1. All documents and communications between and among DHS employees, regarding the creation of the "Disinformation Governance Board," including, but not limited to, any reference to its mission and goals, the legal authority for creating the Board, and the proposed funding for the Board;
2. All documents and communications between DHS employees and any other agency, including White House staff, regarding the creation of the "Disinformation Governance Board";
3. All documents and communications regarding the selection of Nina Jankowicz as the Executive Director of the "Disinformation Governance Board;"
4. All documents and communications regarding the proposed staffing and selection criteria for members or employees of the "Disinformation Governance Board;" and
5. All documents and communications regarding any DHS definition of or criteria for determining what constitutes "disinformation," including a list of employees authorized to make a determination as to whether a particular claim constitutes "disinformation."

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue. To make arrangements to deliver documents or ask any related follow-up questions, please contact Committee on Oversight and Reform Republican Staff at (202) 225-5074. The Committee on Oversight and Reform is the principal oversight committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate "any matter" at "any time" under House Rule X. Thank you in advance for your cooperation with this inquiry.

Sincerely,

  
James Comer  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight and Reform

  
Jody Hice  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Government  
Operations

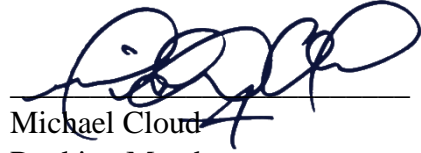
Secretary Mayorkas

April 29, 2022

Page 4 of 5



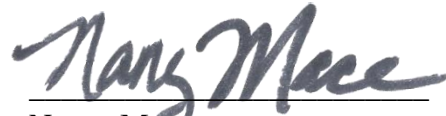
Glenn S. Grothman  
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Subcommittee on National Security



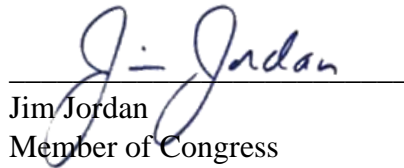
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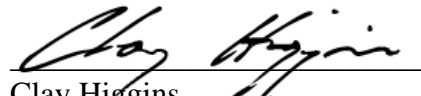
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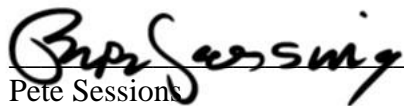
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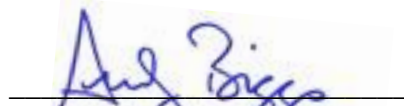
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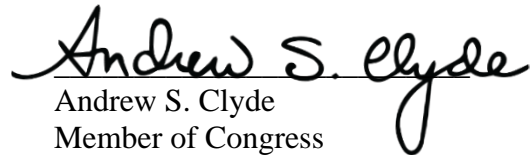
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Member of Congress



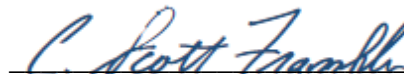
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Member of Congress

Secretary Mayorkas

April 29, 2022

Page 5 of 5



Pat Fallon  
Member of Congress



Yvette Herrell  
Member of Congress



Byron Donalds  
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Carolyn Maloney, Chairwoman  
Committee on Oversight and Reform

The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Government Operations

The Honorable Stephen F. Lynch, Chairman  
Subcommittee on National Security

The Honorable Raja Krishnamoorthi, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy

The Honorable Ro Khanna, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Environment

The Honorable Jamie Raskin, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties