

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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<https://oversight.house.gov>

June 28, 2022

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

We are conducting oversight of the Biden Administration's creation of the "Special Representative for Racial Equity and Justice" (Special Representative) within the U.S. Department of State (Department).¹ On June 17, 2022, the Biden Administration appointed Desirée Cormier Smith as the Department's first Special Representative as part of the Department's Equity Action Plan.² The Special Representative position continues the Biden Administration's prioritization of a radical, progressive agenda the American people consistently reject.³ Committee Republicans question the necessity of this new position. Further, we are concerned about wasting taxpayer dollars on an undefined role which categorizes and further divides Americans instead of focusing on the Department's mission to "protect and promote U.S. security, prosperity, and democratic values and shape an international environment in which all Americans can thrive."⁴ We request further information about this new position.

The Special Representative is the latest evidence the Biden Administration is willing to devote time, funding, and other government resources to enact divisive policies. In the past several months alone, the Biden Administration has attempted to install one of the most prolific purveyors of disinformation to the ill-conceived "Disinformation Governance Board,"⁵ has elevated one of the most adamant deniers of the winner of the 2016 election as spokeswoman for the Administration,⁶ and has supported extreme tactics—including intimidating Supreme Court

¹ U.S. Dep't of State, Press Statement, *The Department of State's Plan to Advance Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities in Foreign Affairs* (Apr. 14, 2022).

² Jimmy Quinn, *Blinken to Name 'Racial Equity and Justice' Special Representative*, NAT. REVIEW (Jun. 10, 2022); U.S. Dep't of State, Press Statement, *Appointment of Desirée Cormier Smith as the Special Representative for Racial Equity and Justice* (June 17, 2022).

³ *National Tracking Poll 2206078*, POLITICO, available at <https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000181-65d7-dbd-a1d9-e5ff96cd0000>.

⁴ *Our Mission*, U.S. DEP'T OF STATE, available at <https://www.state.gov/about/>.

⁵ The Editorial Board, *The Disinformation Governance Board, Disavowed*, WALL ST. J. (May 18, 2022).

⁶ Jake Thomas, *Karine Jean-Pierre 'Stolen Election' Tweets Called Out by Conservatives*, NEWSWEEK (May 10, 2022).

Justices—to effect its preferred policy outcomes.⁷ The Special Representative makes the United States the global mouthpiece for divisive ideologies rather than democracy, equality, and freedom.

As the American people struggle under the Biden Administration’s domestic⁸ and foreign⁹ policy, Committee Republicans question the value and wisdom of continuing to pursue an agenda grounded in waste and division. According to an email obtained by media sources prior to the recent appointment, the Special Representative is to be responsible for “institutionaliz[ing] an enterprise-wide approach to integrating racial and ethnic equity” and “promoting systems of inclusion that mitigate bias, discrimination, and violence” and “fostering more inclusive societies.”¹⁰ Apparently in an attempt to revive the remnants of the “Disinformation Governance Board,”¹¹ the Biden Administration has also tasked the Special Representative with “countering disinformation and societal violence aimed at... marginalized racial and ethnic communities[.]”¹² The Department’s existing Global Engagement Center—which combats disinformation primarily from Russia—does not appear to oversee the Special Representative, whose purview the Department has declined to characterize as primarily domestic or international.¹³

Committee Republicans are concerned with the Biden Administration’s emphasis on “equity,” which—by the Administration’s highest-ranked officials’ own admissions—often runs contrary to the American ideal of equality.¹⁴ Equity has been used as an excuse to discriminate legally, a debasement of individuals to simplistic characterizations, and a disgrace to American heroes of all races and religions (and of either gender) who have fought for equality before the law. The Biden Administration has characterized equity as a “national security challenge with global consequences” in an April 2022 Department press release initially announcing the Special Representative.¹⁵ The Biden Administration’s prior attempts to shoehorn this pernicious ideology into every corner of the federal government have failed, and Committee Republicans urge reconsideration of this latest change within the Department.

To assist Committee Republicans in investigating the creation of the Special Representative for Racial Equity and Justice within the Department of State, please provide the

⁷ Opinion, Andrew C. McCarthy, *Biden encourages people to violate the law by protesting at justices’ homes*, THE HILL (May 11, 2022).

⁸ See, e.g., Sharon Terlep and Annie Gasparro, *Formula Shortage Has Spurred Competition, but Tough Road Remains to Unseat Similac, Enfamil*, WALL ST. J. (Jun. 12, 2022).

⁹ See, e.g., Sharon Bernstein and Tim Reid, *Anger, grief for family members of 13 U.S. troops killed in Afghanistan*, REUTERS (Aug. 28, 2021).

¹⁰ Michael Ginsberg and Henry Rodgers, *State Department Prepares To Announce Worldwide Racial Equity Chief, Leaked Email Shows*, DAILY CALLER (Jun. 10, 2022).

¹¹ *Supra*, n. 5.

¹² *Supra*, n. 10.

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ Kamala Harris (@KamalaHarris), TWITTER (Nov. 1, 2020, 1:06 PM), <https://twitter.com/kamalaharris/status/1322963321994289154?lang=en>; see also Robby Soave, *Kamala Harris Says Equal Outcomes Should Be the Goal of Public Policy*, REASON (Nov. 2, 2020).

¹⁵ *Supra*, n. 1.

The Honorable Antony Blinken

June 28, 2022

Page 3 of 5

following documents and information, covering the period January 20, 2021 to the present, no later than July 12, 2022:

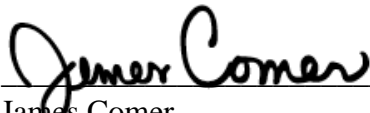
1. All documents and communications pertaining to the creation of the position of Special Representative;
2. All documents and communications pertaining to the appointment of Desirée Cormier Smith as Special Representative;
3. All documents and communications referring or relating to the scope of the Special Representative's authority;
4. All policies and procedures in place regarding the role of the Special Representative.

Additionally, please arrange to provide a briefing on the Department's Special Representative position to Committee Members no later than July 6, 2022.

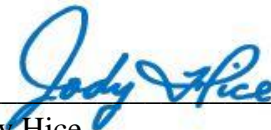
Thank you for your consideration of this issue. To make arrangements to provide the requested briefing, deliver documents, or ask any related follow-up questions, please contact Committee on Oversight and Reform Republican Staff at (202) 225-5074.

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



Glenn S. Grothman
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Security



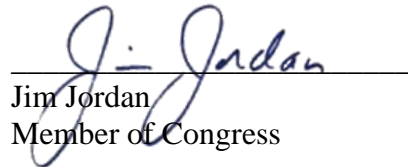
Michael Cloud
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Economic and
Consumer Policy



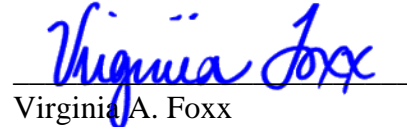
Ralph Norman
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Environment



Nancy Mace
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and
Civil Liberties



Jim Jordan
Member of Congress



Virginia A. Foxx
Member of Congress



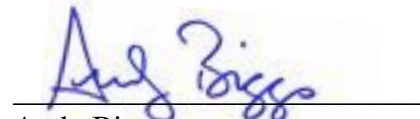
Bob Gibbs
Member of Congress



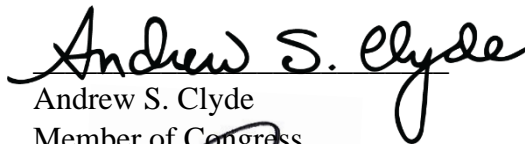
Pete Sessions
Member of Congress



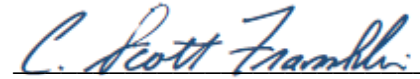
Fred Keller
Member of Congress



Andy Biggs
Member of Congress



Andrew S. Clyde
Member of Congress



C. Scott Franklin
Member of Congress



Pat Fallon
Member of Congress



Byron Donalds
Member of Congress

The Honorable Antony Blinken

June 28, 2022

Page 5 of 5

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