

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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September 25, 2024

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III
Secretary
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Austin:

In 2019, the Democrat-controlled House of Representatives impeached President Donald J. Trump for abuse of power under the theory that he attempted to use a foreign leader—Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky—to benefit his 2020 presidential campaign, despite a lack of any evidence of wrongdoing on the part of President Trump.¹ The Biden-Harris Administration recently flew the same foreign leader—Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky—on an American-taxpayer-funded flight to Pennsylvania, a battleground state in the upcoming 2024 presidential election, which has been described as the “trickiest battleground for Vice President Kamala Harris to win.”² The Committee seeks to determine whether the Biden-Harris Administration attempted to use a foreign leader to benefit Vice President Harris’s presidential campaign and, if so, necessarily committed an abuse of power.

The Committee seeks to understand the circumstances that led—and any facts that could justify—the Biden-Harris Administration to transport President Zelensky on a Department of the Air Force aircraft to Pennsylvania to introduce government officials to President Zelensky about the Russia-Ukraine war.³ President Zelensky’s itinerary included a stop in Pennsylvania to meet with Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro, until recently considered a promising candidate to further Democrats’ hopes to maintain control of the White House.⁴ On September 22, 2024, *The New Yorker* published an interview with President Zelensky, in which he made multiple critical comments about the Trump-Vance ticket.⁵ President Zelensky said that President Trump’s

¹ See generally H. Res. 755, 116th Cong. (2019).

² Allan Smith, *Harris faces her ‘toughest’ battleground fight against Trump in Pennsylvania*, NBC News (Sept. 6, 2024).

³ Breccan F. Thies, *Ukraine’s Zelensky Used U.S. Military Assets To Campaign For Harris in Pennsylvania*, The Federalist (Sept. 23, 2024).

⁴ Joey Garrison & Rebecca Morin, *Why Kamala Harris chose Tim Walz over Josh Shapiro as her running mate*, USA Today (Aug. 6, 2024).

⁵ Joshua Yaffa, *Volodymyr Zelensky Has a Plan for Ukraine’s Victory*, New Yorker (Sep. 22, 2024).

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running mate, Senator J.D. Vance, is “too radical.”⁶ He further stated his belief that President Trump and his administration would not be able stop the war, despite this being one of President Trump’s main campaign platforms (and the peace in the region under the entirety of the former Trump Administration).⁷ This rhetoric coming from a foreign leader released in anticipation of a U.S.-taxpayer-funded visit about the current Administration’s political opponent is highly concerning. The Committee is investigating any coordination or communication among the Biden-Harris Administration, Pennsylvania’s Office of the Governor, and President Zelensky for use or solicitation of use of government property to politically benefit Vice President Harris’s presidential campaign.

Because resources from the Department of the Air Force were used in this apparent campaign event that resulted in the potential interference of a federal election, the Committee seeks information from the Department of Defense. Specifically, the Committee requests the following relevant documents:

Any information and communication, both internal and external, about President Zelensky’s visit to the United States during September 2024.

Please provide these documents as soon as possible, but no later than October 2, 2024. To provide documents to the Committee, or if you have questions regarding this request, please contact the Committee on Oversight and Accountability staff at (202) 225-5074.

The Committee on Oversight and Accountability is the principal oversight committee in 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
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Accountability

cc: The Honorable Jamie B. Raskin, Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Accountability

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*