

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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April 20, 2026

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary
U.S. Department of War
1600 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Hegseth:

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is investigating recent unconfirmed public reporting on the disappearance and death of individuals with access to sensitive U.S. scientific information. These reports allege that at least ten individuals who “had a connection to U.S. nuclear secrets or rocket technology,” have “died or mysteriously vanished in recent years.”¹ If the reports are accurate, these deaths and disappearances may represent a grave threat to U.S. national security and to U.S. personnel with access to scientific secrets. We request a briefing on any information the Department has regarding these deaths and disappearances, as well as the processes and procedures in place to protect American scientific secrets and ensure personnel safety.

Specifically, public reports raise questions about a possible sinister connection between a string of mysterious deaths and disappearances which began in 2023 with the death of Michael David Hicks, who worked as a scientist at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) from 1998 to 2022.² Another JPL alum, Monica Reza, who served as the director of the NASA Lab’s Materials Processing Group, disappeared while hiking in California in June 2025 and remains missing.³ In February 2026 retired Air Force General William Neil McCasland disappeared from his Albuquerque, New Mexico home with a .38 caliber revolver, and remains missing.⁴ Reports have even alleged a direct link between Ms. Reza and General McCasland, characterizing them as having a “close professional connection” through an Air Force-funded research program in the early 2000s pertaining to “advanced materials needed for reusable space vehicles and weapons.”⁵ The other missing or deceased individuals, according to the reports, are two more affiliated with NASA JPL, two affiliated with Los Alamos National Laboratory, an MIT scientist working on

¹ Chris Melore, *Missing nuclear official becomes TENTH person tied to dark pattern surrounding US secrets*, THE DAILY MAIL (April 11, 2026).

² Ross O’Keefe, *Another mysterious NASA death as ninth scientist linked to secret program dies*, N.Y. POST (April 9, 2026).

³ *Id.*

⁴ Zoe Hussain, *Search for missing UFO expert and Air Force Gen. William McCasland hindered by warm weather*, N.Y. POST (March 18, 2026).

⁵ Shane Galvin, *Rocket scientist with ties to missing Air Force general associated with UFOs disappeared under eerily similar circumstances*, N.Y. POST (March 21, 2026)

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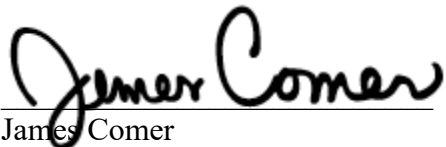
nuclear fusion, a pharmaceutical researcher, and a government contractor working at a nuclear weapons component production facility.⁶

When asked about these mysterious deaths and disappearances last week, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters that the White House would ask the relevant federal agencies for more information.⁷ When reporters asked President Trump a similar question the following day, he told reporters that he had “just left a meeting on that subject,” which he said was “pretty serious stuff,” and indicated that he would have answers about it “in the next week and a half.”⁸ Like President Trump, the Committee is concerned with this fact pattern and seeks to understand whether U.S. national security or American scientific personnel are at risk, and what each relevant agency is doing to mitigate such risk.


On April 16, 2026, Committee staff contacted the Department seeking information on this matter.⁹ In response, the Department confirmed that “there are no active national security investigations of any reported missing person who was a current or a former DoW clearance holder and involved in special access programs.”¹⁰ However, this response leaves the Committee with many unanswered questions. We therefore request a staff-level briefing on this topic as soon as possible but no later than April 27, 2026.

The Committee on Oversight and Government 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. To arrange the briefing or to ask any related follow-up questions, please contact the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Majority staff at (202) 225-5074. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



James Comer
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform



Eric Burlison
Chairman
Subcommittee on Economic Growth,
Energy Policy, and Regulatory
Affairs

⁶ The Daily Mail, *supra* n. 1.

⁷ Juliana Manchester, *Trump says he held meeting on unconfirmed reports of missing scientists*, THE HILL (April 16, 2026).

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Email from Committee staff to U.S. Dep’t of War House Affairs staff (April 16, 2026, at 1:21 PM).

¹⁰ Email from U.S. Dep’t of War House Affairs staff to Peter Spectre, Committee staff (April 16, 2026, at 4:02 PM).

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cc: The Honorable Robert Garcia, Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

The Honorable Maxwell Frost, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Energy Policy,
and Regulatory Affairs