

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

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

September 4, 2026

Mr. David C. Crowley
Milwaukee County Executive
901 N. 9th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Ms. Denita R. Ball
Milwaukee County Sheriff
821 W. State St., Room 107
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Dear Mr. Crowley and Sheriff Ball:

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is conducting oversight of the Milwaukee County Jail's (MCJ) and Milwaukee County Community Reintegration Center's (CRC) inmate digital tablet and laptop program. Recent reporting has revealed that a pre-trial detainee within MCJ accused of murdering three people attempted to intimidate a witness through a tablet provided to detainees by MCJ administrators.¹ Unfortunately, this offense is only one of the latest in a long line of past abuses of programs that issue inmates similar digital technology, many of which are funded through federal grants. Accordingly, the Committee seeks to ensure that federal funding to Milwaukee County is not being used by inmates for criminal purposes, and that appropriate oversight and internal controls exist to prevent such abuses.

The federal government issues millions of dollars in grants to states and localities every year to support criminal rehabilitation, crime prevention, and related initiatives.² Since 2021, Milwaukee has received grants in the tens of millions from the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), often through grants authorized under the Second Chance Act or the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program.³ However, Congress did not authorize the Byrne JAG program, the Second Chance Act, or any other federal criminal justice grant in order to give inmates the means to intimidate witnesses or commit other criminal offenses.

The abuse of tablets and laptops by inmates is not isolated to Milwaukee. In May 2026, the Committee began an investigation into the misuse of tablets by inmates in California's prison system.⁴ Despite this, as Milwaukee County Executive, Mr. Crowley extended a previous agreement with a third-party vendor, Inmate Calling Solutions (ICS), to continue supplying

¹ Bill Milston, *Milwaukee homicides, 3 killed; jail privileges revoked for man accused*, FOX6 MILWAUKEE (Aug. 28, 2026).

² See Nathan James, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE GRANTS: HISTORY, AUTHORIZATIONS, AND APPROPRIATIONS, R48898 (Mar. 27, 2026).

³ See *OJP Awards Since FY2021 By NOFO As of 9/1/26*, U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, available at <https://charts.ojp.usdoj.gov/t/public/views/OJPawardsDashboardallFiscalYears/AwardsByNOFO?%3Aembed=y&%>.

⁴ Letter from James Comer, Chairman H. Comm. On Oversight and Gov't Reform, *et al.*, to Gavin Newsom, Gov. of California (May 26, 2026).

tablets to pre-trial detainees through March 2028.⁵ The number of tablets funneled to Milwaukee County inmates during both of your tenures has been enormous, with the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office receiving at least 960 tablets and the CRC receiving at least 1,232 tablets since 2022.⁶

The absurdity of this policy was recently highlighted in Milwaukee County's court system. During an August 28, 2026 criminal hearing for an accused murderer, Milwaukee County Judge David Borowski questioned why Milwaukee penal authorities would "giv[e] laptops and iPads to defendants that are charged in homicides, or any defendant?"⁷ During the hearing, Judge Borowski discussed presiding over an earlier case in which an inmate used a government-issued laptop to communicate with trial witnesses and allegedly access child pornography.⁸ Judge Borowski also recalled a case before a different judge in which a defendant sent up to 1,500 threatening messages from a tablet.⁹

To assist the Committee's oversight of this matter, we request the following documents and information, covering the period from the beginning of Mr. Crowley's tenure as Milwaukee County Executive on May 4, 2020, until the present unless otherwise indicated, as soon as possible but no later than September 18, 2026:

1. All documents and communications within or between the Milwaukee County Executive, MJC, CRC, and/or the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office regarding inmate abuse or misuse of government-issued digital tablets, laptops, computers, or any other form of information technology;
2. All documents and communications within or between the Milwaukee County Executive, MCJ, CRC, and/or the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office regarding the March 2025 extension of the ICS inmate tablet contract through March 2028; and
3. All documents detailing whether any federal funds were spent on MCJ's and CRC's digital tablet and laptop program, including a detailed list of fund recipients and subrecipients for all grants awarded to MJC, CRC, or the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office.

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 for delivery of documents or to ask any

⁵ Montse Ricossa, *Comments from Milwaukee judge on inmate access to tablets make it onto campaign trail for governor*, CBS58 (Aug. 31, 2026).

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Drake Bentley, *Milwaukee homicide defendants intimidating witnesses and victims from jail through tablets, local judge says*, THE MILWAUKEE COURIER (Aug. 28, 2026).

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*

Mr. David C. Crowley
Ms. Denita R. Ball
September 4, 2026
Page 3 of 3

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


Glenn Grothman
Chairman
Subcommittee on Health Care and
Financial Services


Tim Burchett
Chairman
Subcommittee on Delivering on Government Efficiency

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

The Honorable Raja Krishnamoorthi, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Health Care and Financial Services

The Honorable Melanie Stansbury, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Delivering on Government Efficiency