

HEARING ON COMPLIANCE WITH COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT

HEARING BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON RESPONSIVENESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY TO OVERSIGHT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY, JULY 18, 2023

Serial No. 118–36

Printed for the use of the Committee on the Judiciary



Available via: <http://judiciary.house.gov>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

WASHINGTON : 2023

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

JIM JORDAN, Ohio, *Chair*

DARRELL ISSA, California	JERROLD NADLER, New York, <i>Ranking</i>
KEN BUCK, Colorado	<i>Member</i>
MATT GAETZ, Florida	ZOE LOFGREN, California
MIKE JOHNSON, Louisiana	SHEILA JACKSON LEE, Texas
ANDY BIGGS, Arizona	STEVE COHEN, Tennessee
TOM McCLINTOCK, California	HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR., Georgia
TOM TIFFANY, Wisconsin	ADAM SCHIFF, California
THOMAS MASSIE, Kentucky	ERIC SWALWELL, California
CHIP ROY, Texas	TED LIEU, California
DAN BISHOP, North Carolina	PRAMILA JAYAPAL, Washington
VICTORIA SPARTZ, Indiana	J. LUIS CORREA, California
SCOTT FITZGERALD, Wisconsin	MARY GAY SCANLON, Pennsylvania
CLIFF BENTZ, Oregon	JOE NEGUSE, Colorado
BEN CLINE, Virginia	LUCY McBATH, Georgia
LANCE GOODEN, Texas	MADELEINE DEAN, Pennsylvania
JEFF VAN DREW, New Jersey	VERONICA ESCOBAR, Texas
TROY NEHLS, Texas	DEBORAH ROSS, North Carolina
BARRY MOORE, Alabama	CORI BUSH, Missouri
KEVIN KILEY, California	GLENN IVEY, Maryland
HARRIET HAGEMAN, Wyoming	BECCA BALINT, Vermont
NATHANIEL MORAN, Texas	
LAUREL LEE, Florida	
WESLEY HUNT, Texas	
RUSSELL FRY, South Carolina	

SUBCOMMITTEE ON RESPONSIVENESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY TO OVERSIGHT

BEN CLINE, Virginia, *Chair*

JEFF VAN DREW, New Jersey	ERIC SWALWELL, California, <i>Ranking</i>
NATHANIEL MORAN, Texas	<i>Member</i>
LAUREL LEE, Florida	GLENN IVEY, Maryland

CHRISTOPHER HIXON, *Majority Staff Director*
AMY RUTKIN, *Minority Staff Director & Chief of Staff*

C O N T E N T S

TUESDAY, JULY 18, 2023

	Page
OPENING STATEMENTS	
The Honorable Ben Cline, Chair of the Subcommittee on Responsiveness and Accountability to Oversight from the State of Virginia	1
The Honorable Eric Swalwell, Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Responsiveness and Accountability to Oversight from the State of California	3
WITNESSES	
The Hon. Naz Durakoglu, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, U.S. Department of State	
Oral Testimony	4
Prepared Testimony	7
The Hon. Melanie Egorin, Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of Health and Human Services	
Oral Testimony	9
Prepared Testimony	11
LETTERS, STATEMENTS, ETC. SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING	
All materials submitted for the record by the Subcommittee on Responsiveness and Accountability to Oversight are listed below	25
An article entitled, "Trump's false or misleading claims total 30,573 over 4 years," Jan. 23, 2021, The Washington Post, submitted by the Honorable Glenn Ivey, a Member of the Subcommittee on Responsiveness and Accountability to Oversight from the State of Maryland, for the record	
A letter to the Honorable Christopher A. Wray, Jul. 17, 2023, from the Honorable Jim Jordan, Chair of the Committee on the Judiciary from the State of Ohio, submitted by the Honorable Ben Cline, Chair of the Subcommittee on Responsiveness and Accountability to Oversight from the State of Virginia, for the record	

HEARING ON COMPLIANCE WITH COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT

Tuesday, July 18, 2023

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON RESPONSIVENESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY
TO OVERSIGHT

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Washington, DC

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:01 a.m., in Room 2237, Rayburn House Office Building, the Hon. Ben Cline [Chair of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Members present: Representatives Cline, Van Drew, Moran, Lee, Swalwell, and Ivey.

Mr. CLINE. The Subcommittee will come to order.

Without objection, the Chair is authorized to declare a recess at any time. If you would all rise so that we can say the Pledge of Allegiance.

ALL. I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Mr. CLINE. Thank you. All right. Welcome, everyone, to today's Hearing on Compliance with Committee Oversight. I will now recognize myself for an opening statement.

This is the fourth hearing of the Subcommittee on Responsiveness and Accountability to Oversight. Labeling Content Dangerous Misinformation, Disinformation, or Malinformation has been the government's main method of suppressing and silencing the airing of perspectives that are in line with the governments.

The Committee's Select Subcommittee on Weaponization of the Federal Government has been working to uncover the full extent of collusion with or coercion by the Biden Administration, its agencies, and social media companies. As part of this investigation the Committee has sent numerous requests to agencies and social media companies, reiterated requests numerous times culminating in subpoenas, or noncompliant agencies and companies including the State Department's Global Engagement Center and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Today the Subcommittee seeks to obtain answers directly from representatives of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of State. We look forward to engaging with

our witnesses today to discuss the productions we have received to date and the status of our other outstanding requests.

For example, the CDC was viewed as the lead authority on matters related to the COVID-19 pandemic and played a significant role in adjudicating the factuality of COVID-19 claims on social media. As a Federal Court just explained in *Missouri v. Biden*, the quote,

CDC became the determiner of truth for social media platforms, deciding whether COVID-19 statements made on social media were true or false. And the CDC was aware it had become the determiner of truth for social media platforms. If the CDC said a statement on social media was false, it was suppressed in spite of alternative views.

Accordingly, it is important that the Committee have the opportunity to determine how the CDC and actors with which the agency was communicated labeled speech MDM, or malinformation, to effectuate its takedown from platforms and the nature of the relationship between CDC and social media companies.

On March 22, 2023, the Committee wrote to Secretary Becerra, Surgeon General Murthy, the National Institutes of Health, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and the Food and Drug Administration requesting documents and information relating to how and to what extent the HHS and its components coerced and colluded with companies and other intermediaries to censor speech. These requests have largely gone unanswered.

On April 28, 2023, Chair Jordan issued subpoenas to CDC Director Walensky and GEC Special Envoy Rubin regarding coercion by the Federal Government to have companies and groups engage in content moderation. To date the responses to these subpoenas have been deficient and overdue. While the CDC has produced some documents to the Committee and made other documents available for review, questions remain. For example, the CDC still needs to produce certain documents to the Committee pursuant to that subpoena such as internal communications on the matter.

On April 18, 2023, the Committee wrote to Secretary Blinken requesting documents and information relating to how and to what extent the State Department and its components coerced and colluded with companies and other intermediaries to censor speech.

On April 28, 2023, Chair Jordan issued a subpoena to GEC Special Envoy Rubin to investigate the nature and extent of the GEC's interactions with companies and groups over content moderation. GEC's response to date, a mere 1,195 pages that is extremely limited in scope, has been wholly incomplete and inadequate. This is despite State Department's representatives proffering that production would be in the tens of thousands of pages at least as virtually everything GEC does is related to content moderation on social media.

These hearings play a critical role in assisting the Judiciary Committee in its oversight obligations which in turn allows the Committee to examine potential legislative changes within our jurisdiction. The courts have recognized that Congress' power to conduct oversight is an indispensable component of our authority to legislate. Without the information that the Committee needs from the Administration we cannot do our jobs.

We look forward today to engaging with the witnesses that have appeared to discuss the productions we have received to date and to discuss the status of our other outstanding requests. Thank you.

I now recognize the Ranking Member Mr. Swalwell for his opening statement.

Mr. SWALWELL. It never gets old that Chair Jordan is complaining about subpoena compliance. We are approaching 500 days since Chair Jordan has failed to comply with a lawfully issued subpoena for the greatest crime ever committed in America, a crime where more people have been arrested, more people have been prosecuted. His country has asked him to assist in the investigation and he has refused to comply, yet he is all too eager to bring to this Committee people who are working hard for the government, working hard for taxpayers, to carry out the mission of Health and Human Services, to carry out the mission of the State Department.

He is too good to honor a subpoena, but he has complaints, real complaints about what these hardworking government officials are doing. Again, it is never going to get old. It is never going to be taken seriously. Thankfully these witnesses are willing to do something that Chair Jordan is not willing to do, which is actually shows and answer questions.

As we waste the time of the State Department we have scrambled fighter jets to address threats from Iran in the Gulf. We are protecting and defending Taiwan against a potential showdown with China. We are helping Ukraine and leading the way on the front on the Western side as Russia invades their country. There is a lot going on in the world, but it seems that Jim Jordan thinks the most important thing we can do is to stop the State Department from fighting disinformation.

By the way, tomorrow the President of Israel will come and speak to Congress and I promise you he will probably mention the rise of anti-Semitism across the globe; and of course we know all too well here in America, but he won't have to look very far because Chair Jordan the very next day is using his power as Chair to bring one of the most anti-Semitic witnesses you could possibly bring into Congress to testify before Chair Jordan's Weaponization Committee.

So, that is the priorities of Chair Jordan these days.

It was made all too clear last when we had FBI Director Chris Wray testify to Congress just what this is all about. Chair Jordan complained that in the 2020 election he believed that the FBI prevented the public from seeing more of Hunter Biden's laptop, if you can believe that, the Republicans would have won the 2020 election if more Americans could have seen a private citizen's nonconsensual nudes. That was Chair Jordan's complaint.

So, we now see that the MAGA party is not a party of ideas. It is not a party of principles. It is a party of violating an individual's privacy to own the libs and try and win an election. Today we are going to learn that not only are they a party of nonconsensual nudes; they want to be a party of disinformation and they want to stop the State Department from attacking foreign disinformation that could affect global stability and of course how Americans view their information as they make decisions on elections.

We have some slides I would like to show, because this is what Chair Jordan and MAGA Republicans would like to stay in the ether in the universe. This has been identified as clear disinformation attacking Speaker Pelosi. Again the Tennessee GOP, which we know is a Russian site, a piece of social media posting propping up Donald Trump. So, this is what they would prefer. They would prefer an election that was decided because of disinformation.

This would be like the 2022 Cincinnati Reds who lost 100 games last season—Cincinnati Reds lost 100 games. So, it would be like if the Cincinnati Reds went to Major League Baseball and said, commissioner, in the upcoming season we would like corked bats, pine tar for the pitchers, and steroids to be allowed for our clean-up hitters. We can't win with ideas, so we need to cheat. That is what this hearing is about, is that MAGA Republicans cannot win with ideas and so they want to flood the zone this upcoming election with disinformation and a private citizen's nonconsensual nudes.

That is just weird. I think it is also wrong. We are not going to be silent about it and we are always going to remind the public that this Committee has no credibility because its Chair himself refuses to follow a lawful subpoena. I yield back.

Mr. CLINE. I am not going to take time to respond to that. I have already given my opening remarks, but I will display the Chair's response to the subpoena for those interested.

We will now introduce today's witnesses. The Honorable Naz Durakoğlu is the Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Legislative Affairs. She was confirmed by the Senate on June 16, 2002.

The Honorable Melanie Egorin is the Assistant Secretary for Legislation at the Department of Health and Human Services. She was confirmed by the Senate on September 30, 2021.

We welcome our witnesses and thank them for appearing today. We will begin by swearing you in. Would you please rise and raise your right hand?

Do you swear or affirm under penalty of perjury that the testimony you are about to give is true and correct to the best of your knowledge, information, and belief, so help you God?

Let the record reflect that the witnesses have answered in the affirmative.

Thank you. Please be seated.

Please know that your written testimony will be entered into the record in its entirety. Accordingly we ask that you summarize your testimony in five minutes.

Ms. Durakoğlu—did I get that right—you may begin.

STATEMENT OF NAZ DURAKOĞLU

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. Thank you. Good morning. Chair Cline, Ranking Member Swalwell, distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, it is a pleasure to be here today to discuss the Department of State's commitment to being responsive to Congressional Oversight. I also want to take a moment to welcome our interns in the Legislative Affairs Bureau who are here today.

With more than a decade of experience as a staffer in both the House and the Senate I have deep appreciation for Congress' role in conducting oversight of Federal agencies. My bureau, the State Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs, also known as H, is the Department's conduit to Capitol Hill and leads on all Congressional engagement.

The H is your primary resource for your State Department questions including constituent passport, visa, and overseas emergency inquiries, Congressional delegation travel, and technical assistance on foreign affairs legislation.

In 2022, the Department conducted a record-breaking 3,431 Congressional engagements. In 2021 and 2022 the H facilitated 2,710 responses to Congressional letters, transmitted 982 Congressionally mandated reports, supported 475 CODELs and STAFFDELs, and provided technical assistance on more than 1,000 pieces of legislation. So far in the 118th Congress, we are set to beat this record. The H has supported 57 hearings, 1,611 briefings and meetings, responded to 645 letters from Members of Congress, produced 325 reports to Congress, and facilitated 403 CODELs and STAFFDELs.

We're here to ensure you and your staffs have the information you need to serve your constituents and we pride ourselves on being open and accessible to our colleagues on the Hill.

This approach extends to Congressional oversight. We are just over halfway through 2023 and the Department has 28 open and wide-ranging investigations from six separate House Committees. Across all House inquiries the Department has provided more than 16,000 pages in documents and regularly conducts meetings and briefings to help facilitate Congressional oversight. As Secretary Blinken said during his confirmation hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, no foreign policy can be sustained without the informed consent of the American people. For this reason the secretary and the Department's leadership view Congress as a true partner and we are committed to working with you in good faith on your oversight priorities.

In response to this Committee's inquiry into the Department's Global Engagement Center, or GEC, we produced nearly 1,200 pages in documents and offered to brief Committee staff on the GEC's work. We in fact welcome the opportunity to brief all Members on the GEC's important work to identify and expose foreign information manipulation operations and strategies overseas. The Department remains committed to engaging in the constitutionally mandated accommodations process with this Committee and we will continue to review and produce additional responsive material on a rolling basis.

As we respond to Congressional oversight requests the H and the dedicated public servants throughout the State Department must also continue daily work to address complex diplomatic and national security priorities including Russia's war of aggression Ukraine, global competition with the People's Republic of China, a growing international food security crisis, and root causes of migration in the Western Hemisphere. Recognizing the balance the Department must strike in managing these challenging issues while responding to Congressional oversight requests we work to maintain productive relationships across parties, Committees, and both

Chambers of Congress. As such, in addition to producing records responsive to your request we are in regular communication with your staff on these and other matters.

Once again, I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to appear before you today and I look forward to answering your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of the Hon. Durakoğlu follows:]

Written Statement
Naz Durakoğlu, Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs
House Judiciary Committee
Subcommittee on Responsiveness and Accountability to Oversight
“Compliance with Committee Oversight”
July 18, 2023

Chairman Cline, Ranking Member Swalwell, distinguished members of the Subcommittee, it is a pleasure to be here today to discuss the Department of State’s commitment to being responsive to congressional oversight. With more than a decade of experience as a staffer in both the House and Senate, I have deep appreciation for Congress’ role in conducting oversight of federal agencies.

My bureau, the State Department’s Bureau of Legislative Affairs, also known as “H”, is the Department’s conduit to Capitol Hill and leads on all congressional engagement. H is your primary resource for all your State Department questions, including constituent passport, visa, and overseas emergency inquiries, congressional delegation travel, and technical assistance on foreign affairs legislation.

In 2022, we conducted a record-breaking 3,431 congressional engagements. In 2021 and 2022, H facilitated 2,710 responses to congressional letters, transmitted 982 congressionally mandated reports, supported 475 CODELs and STAFFDELS, and provided technical assistance on more than 1,000 pieces of legislation. So far in the 118th Congress, H has supported 57 hearings, 1,611 briefings and meetings, responded to 645 letters from Members of Congress, produced 325 reports to Congress, and facilitated 403 CODELs and STAFFDELS.

H is here to ensure you and your staffs have the information you need to serve your constituents, and we pride ourselves on being open and accessible to our colleagues on the Hill.

This approach also extends to congressional oversight. We are just over halfway through 2023 and the Department already has 27 open and wide-ranging investigations from six separate House committees. Across all open House inquiries, the Department has provided more than 16,000 pages in documents and regularly conducts meetings and briefings to help facilitate congressional oversight of complex issues. As Secretary Blinken said during his confirmation hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, no foreign policy can be sustained without the informed consent of the American people. For this reason, the Secretary and the Department's leadership view Congress as a true partner, and we are committed to working with you in good faith on your oversight priorities.

In response to this Committee's inquiry into the Department's Global Engagement Center, or GEC, we produced more than 1,000 pages in documents and offered to brief Committee staff on the GEC's work. We, in fact, welcome the opportunity to brief all Members on the GEC's important work to counter international and foreign malign influence attacks and strategies overseas. The Department remains committed to engaging in the constitutionally mandated accommodations process with this committee and we will continue to review and produce additional responsive material on a rolling basis.

As we respond to congressional oversight requests, H and the dedicated public servants throughout the State Department must also continue daily work to address complex diplomatic and national security priorities, including Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine, global competition with the People's Republic of China, a growing international food security crisis, and root causes of migration in the Western Hemisphere. Recognizing the balance the Department must strike in managing these challenging issues while responding to a growing amount of congressional oversight requests, we work to maintain productive relationships across parties, committees, and chambers of Congress. As such, Chairman Kline, in addition to producing records responsive to your requests, we are in regular communication with your staff on these and other matters.

Once again, I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to appear before you today and I look forward to answering your questions.

Mr. CLINE. Thank you, Ms. Durakoğlu.
Ms. Egorin, you may begin.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. MELANIE EGORIN

Ms. EGORIN. Good morning, Chair Cline, Ranking Member Swalwell, Members of the Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Department of Health and Human Services.

I am Melanie Anne Egorin, the Assistant Secretary for Legislation at the Department of Health and Human Services. Prior to coming to the HHS, I spent more than 15 years working in Congress and at the Government Accountability Office, including as serving on the professional staff of the House Committee on Ways and Means for almost a decade. I have a deep appreciation for the important work of Congress and the critical role that oversight plays in the effective functioning of our government. I believe it is vital that Congress ask questions about current policies and programs to improve their integrity, our healthcare system, and the overall health of the Nation.

The HHS' mission is to enhance the health and well-being of all Americans. We accomplish this mission every day by providing for effective health and human services, by fostering sound and sustained advances in the sciences underlying medicine, public health, and social services.

Our 12 operating divisions administer a wide variety of health and human services on behalf of the American people and the world. The HHS provides access to coverage for more than 100 million people through Medicare, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, and the Health Insurance Marketplace. We also provide vital services through Indian Health Service, Community Health Centers, and the U.S. Public Health Service. We protect Americans from health safety and threats, both foreign and domestic, and we oversee the safety, effectiveness and quality of foods, drugs, vaccines and medical devices. As you can see the HHS programs touch the lives of all Americans.

As part of this critical mission the HHS regularly interacts with Congress and responds to Congressional oversight requests. The HHS recognizes and appreciates the importance of Congressional oversight and we are committed to continuing to work with Congress in good faith. To that end my office serves as the primary link between the Department and Congress, which includes facilitating responses to Congressional oversight. Given the breadth of the programs we administer the HHS receives inquiries from virtually every Member of Congress and regularly receives a variety of oversight requests from multiple Committees in both the House and Senate.

Since the 118th Congress began, the Department has sent nearly 100 letters responding specifically to oversight inquiries, produced more than 11,000 pages of documents in response to oversight requests, and responded to numerous other Congressional requests for information. Department officials have testified at a multitude of oversight hearings, provided briefings in connection with a wide range of oversight inquiries. We are also actively responding to 180

ongoing engagements by GAO, 63 of which were initiated just this year.

In responding to the substantial volume of Congressional oversight requests this Congress, we engage in an accommodations process seeking to balance Congress' interests consistent with Executive Branch interest while working within and being mindful of our resource constraints. We often receive broad and complex requests that require appropriate time and attention to ensure that we are providing accurate information and which may involve many components of the Department. In all cases we are working hard to respond to Congress' oversight requests.

As you know, we have been actively engaging with the Judiciary Committee regarding its multiple oversight requests and to date have provided more than 2,000 pages of documents including a production just last week. We have also arranged to have an additional 1,200 pages of sensitive records be reviewed in camera, sent multiple letters and responses to the Committee's inquiries, and participated in a transcribed interview.

As I believe my testimony today reflects, the HHS has demonstrated a record of working diligently to address the broad range of oversight requests from Congress including this committee. The HHS is committed to continuing to engage with the Committee in good faith and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of the Hon. Egorin follows:]

Statement by
Melanie Anne Egorin, PhD
Assistant Secretary for Legislation
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
on
Hearing on Compliance with Committee Oversight
before
Subcommittee on Responsiveness and Accountability to Oversight
Committee on the Judiciary
United States House of Representatives
July 18, 2023

Chairman Cline, Ranking Member Swalwell, and Members of the Committee, I appreciate this opportunity to testify on the efforts of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS or Department) to respond to oversight requests from the Committee on the Judiciary (Committee) during the 118th Congress. I am Melanie Anne Egorin, the Assistant Secretary for Legislation at HHS. Prior to coming to HHS, I spent more than 15 years working in Congress and at the Government Accountability Office (GAO), including serving on the professional staff of the House Committee on Ways and Means for nearly 10 years. I have a deep appreciation for the important work of Congress and the important role that oversight plays in the furtherance of its legislative function. As I noted in prior testimony for my confirmation to serve as the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, I believe it is vital that we ask questions about current policies and programs so we can improve programmatic integrity, our healthcare system, and the overall health of the nation.

HHS's mission is to enhance the health and well-being of all Americans. We accomplish this mission every day by providing for effective health and human services and by fostering sound, sustained scientific advances that underly medicine, public health, and social services. Our 12 operating divisions include nine agencies in the U.S. Public Health Service and three human services agencies. Collectively, these divisions administer a wide variety of health and human services programs. From providing access to health care coverage to more than 100 million people through Medicare, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, and the Health Insurance Marketplace, and services provided through the Indian Health Service, Community Health Centers, and the U.S. Public Health Service, to working to protect Americans from health, safety, and security threats both foreign and domestic, and overseeing the safety, effectiveness, and quality of foods, drugs, vaccines, and medical devices, HHS programs touch the lives of all Americans.

Addressing Congress's Oversight Requests

As part of its critical mission to enhance and protect the health and well-being of all Americans, HHS regularly interacts with Congress and responds to congressional oversight requests. HHS

recognizes and appreciates the importance of congressional oversight and is committed to continuing to work with Congress in good faith to address its informational needs while balancing the institutional interests of the Department and the Executive Branch. Given the breadth of the programs administered by the Department, we receive inquiries from virtually every Member's office and regularly receive a variety of oversight requests from multiple Committees in both the House and Senate. In the six months since the 118th Congress began, the Department has sent nearly 100 letters responding to oversight inquiries from a multitude of committees, produced more than eleven thousand pages of documents in response to committees' oversight requests, and responded to numerous other congressional letters and requests for information and assistance. Department officials also have testified at multiple oversight hearings and provided frequent briefings for committee staff in connection with various inquiries. We are also actively responding to 180 ongoing engagements with the Government Accountability Office—63 of which were initiated since the start of this year.

In responding to the substantial volume of congressional oversight requests this Congress, we engage in the constitutionally mandated accommodation process, seeking to respond to Congress's legitimate efforts to seek information in aid of its legislative function in a manner consistent with Executive Branch interests, while being cognizant of resource constraints. We receive many broad and complex oversight requests that may involve multiple components of the Department. Such requests require appropriate time and attention to allow us to provide accurate information. At times, committees also have requested particularly sensitive information, including information implicating market sensitivities, ongoing law enforcement investigations, personal health information (PHI), and personally identifiable information (PII). In situations like these, we have pursued accommodations that balance the Committee's interests with our obligation to safeguard certain information. In all cases, we work hard to respond to Congress's oversight requests about the Department's policies and programs.

The Committee's Oversight Requests

With respect to the subject of today's hearing, the Department has been actively engaging with the Committee regarding its multiple oversight requests this Congress. To date, these efforts include providing the Committee more than 2,000 pages of documents, arranging for an additional 1,200 pages of sensitive records to be reviewed *in camera*, sending multiple letters and providing detailed information, and participating in a transcribed interview.

As you are aware, on March 22, 2023, the Committee sent a letter to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that included a series of broad requests for documents largely regarding certain interactions with companies or other third-party groups. The Department sent an initial response letter to the Committee by the deadline requested, in which we acknowledged

that the Department was working to provide information responsive to the Committee's letter.¹ Despite this written commitment, the Committee issued a subpoena three weeks later with little advance notice. In the intervening time, the Committee sent five additional letters to the Department and HHS operating divisions that included similarly broad requests for documents on the same topic. Since March, the Department has been working diligently to address the Committee's multiple inquiries. To date, we have made multiple document productions totaling more than 2,000 pages. As we informed Committee staff, we intend to continue cooperating consistent with the accommodation process.

The Department has also been actively engaging the Committee's requests regarding the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). On February 27, 2023, the Committee sent a letter raising certain concerns regarding ORR's Unaccompanied Children (UC) Program and requesting a transcribed interview with the ORR Director. In a good faith effort to provide the Committee responsive information, the Department sent a detailed response by the Committee's requested deadline and offered to schedule a staff briefing with senior leadership.² The Department also facilitated the ORR Director's participation in the requested transcribed interview voluntarily.

The Committee sent another letter to the Department on February 27, 2023, requesting documents related to the case files of an unaccompanied minor who had previously been in ORR's custody. The Department responded to this letter by the Committee's requested deadline, and proceeded to offer an *in camera* review of more than 1,200 pages of records.³ As we explained in our letter to the Committee, the documents that were requested are highly sensitive, appear to be relevant to matters at issue in an ongoing criminal proceeding, and include a significant amount of PII and PHI of a minor. HHS has a strong interest in protecting the privacy of unaccompanied children and not interfering with the integrity of criminal proceedings.

Conclusion

As I believe my testimony today reflects, HHS has a demonstrated record of working diligently to address a broad range of oversight requests from this Committee and other oversight bodies. We look forward to continuing to work with this Committee and others to respond to oversight requests in a timely manner consistent with the accommodation process, while upholding the institutional interests of the Department.

¹ Letter from Melanie Anne Egorin, PhD, Assistant Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, to the Honorable Jim Jordan, Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary (Apr. 5, 2023).

² Letter from Melanie Anne Egorin, PhD, Assistant Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, to the Honorable Jim Jordan, Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary (Mar. 13, 2023).

³ Letter from Melanie Anne Egorin, PhD, Assistant Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, to the Honorable Jim Jordan, Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary (Mar. 10, 2023).

Mr. CLINE. Thank you very much.

We will now proceed with questions under the five-minute rule. I want to begin with the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Moran.

Mr. MORAN. Assistant Secretary Durakoğlu, I would like to direct my questions to you, if I could. I want to talk to you specifically about the March 22, 2023, request and subsequent April 28, 2023, subpoena which was sent to the State Department and ask you some questions about that in particular.

What was your role in gathering the responsive documents that we are here to talk about here today?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. So I'm part of a team across the State Department. We have 15 full-time employees devoted to oversight. The Legislative Affairs Bureau has a role in that, so I can tell you that I actually did personally look through the four productions we gave you guys on this Committee.

Mr. MORAN. Great. Did you also look behind the redactions to the information that had been redacted?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. Yes, sir.

Mr. MORAN. All right. So you are familiar with all the documents and the redaction and the substance behind the redactions?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. For the most part, yes.

Mr. MORAN. Are you aware that the deadline for responding to that April 28 subpoena was May 22, 2023?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. Yes, that was in the letter.

Mr. MORAN. Is there a reason why the State Department did not make its first production until June 23rd?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. We wanted to be as responsive as possible and collect as many documents as possible.

Mr. MORAN. Prior to the May 22, 2023, deadline did the State Department in response to that April 28, 2023, subpoena—did it assert any privileges or assert any objections in writing to the subpoena?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. Not that I'm aware of, but if there are confidentiality issues, we're happy to work with your staff on that.

Mr. MORAN. Do you agree that the law requires that any objections or privileges be asserted prior to the date that the documents are determined to be—the deadline for documentation?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. I would definitely refer to my legal advisor's office on that question.

Mr. MORAN. During a call on June 8, 2023, the State Department representatives asserted that production would be in the tens of thousands of pages. We have about 1,200 pages. Do you know when those other several thousands of pages will be produced?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. I don't have the exact dates, but I know they're in production and we are producing on a rolling basis.

Mr. MORAN. Is there a point person among the 15 that you mentioned that is in charge of the supplementation?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. There are a few individuals, and I know your staff is in touch with them.

Mr. MORAN. How far in the process are they on the supplementation and could we expect it say by August 1st?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. I'm not sure on an exact date, but we can get you that information.

Mr. MORAN. Does the Global Engagement Center have an internal clock or deadline that it would like to meet to be done with the total production?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. I don't believe the Global Engagement Center sets any deadlines, but I will say we do take subject matter experts who are full time on the Global Engagement Center off their daily duties to be able to help produce these documents.

Mr. MORAN. The subpoena compels the production of certain documents and communications internal to the GEC or between the GEC and the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government and its agencies including the FBI, as you know. I understand that the State Department has not produced all the documents responsive to these categories and specifically—I know asked generally just a second about when supplementation would occur, but on this specific instance do you know when supplementation of those documents would occur?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. Sir, are you asking about FBI records or GEC records?

Mr. MORAN. GEC records, but those communications with the Executive Branch including communications with the FBI which the GEC would have.

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. So, we search our entire system, so if it's within our system we are searching through all of that.

Mr. MORAN. Have you already run an internal computerized search for keywords internally for documents that would be responsive to the request?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. Yes.

Mr. MORAN. Do you know what keywords were used?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. No, sir, I don't.

Mr. MORAN. Are there any internal memos that would talk about what keywords to use?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. I'm not aware, sir, but I will say that to prioritize our search we meet with your staff, and so that actually informs the search.

Mr. MORAN. On the redactions themselves, to work with the Committee staff to determine which redactions are appropriate, which ones are not, and where consensus can be made, is there a time in the next week when somebody from your office or you could be available to meet with them to actually go through and look at the redacted information in camera and determine whether or not that is appropriate or not?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. We're happy to send my staff as well as the legal advisor's staff to be able to have that conversation, yes.

Mr. MORAN. You guys could do that in the next week, you think?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. I believe we could do it in the next week, yes.

Mr. MORAN. All right. Anybody else involved in determining which information gets produced other than the 15 that you are talking about?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. Yes, we do pull full-time subject matter experts off their duties to be able to actually sort through the information. So, these are foreign policy experts and those who are engaging in regular day-to-day department activities.

Mr. MORAN. If there was one person among all in the group that you would say the Committee needs to communicate with on this

issue, in particular, for supplementation and for the redaction issues, who would that be?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. Sir, I wouldn't say there's one person because this is a collaborative effort truly in the Department. So, there isn't one person, but if folks want to get in touch with me or the team they're already in touch with, we can actually arrange that conversation.

Mr. MORAN. All right. Thank you, Assistant Secretary Durakoğlu.

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. Thank you.

Mr. MORAN. Thank you for your time. Appreciate it.

I would yield back.

Mr. CLINE. I thank the gentleman.

The gentleman from California is recognized for five minutes.

Mr. SWALWELL. The Judiciary Committee has oversight jurisdiction over a single agency at Health and Human Services, the Office of Refugee Resettlement, and the purpose of this agency is to provide immigrants with humanitarian resources when they enter our border. Nowhere is this more important than with children, especially those unaccompanied by a parent or a guardian.

Assistant Secretary Egorin, isn't it truth that Chair Jordan demanded access to files about unaccompanied minors as part of his request?

Ms. EGORIN. Thank you for the question, Congressman. We do have requests regarding the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

Mr. SWALWELL. Including unaccompanied minors?

Ms. EGORIN. Including document requests for—related to the Office of Refugee Resettlement, yes.

Mr. SWALWELL. Due to legitimate privacy concerns because we are talking about children, you offered to provide Chair Jordan with a in camera review, is that right?

Ms. EGORIN. That is correct. We provided 1,200 pages of information for in camera review which the staff were able to review.

Mr. SWALWELL. In camera means that it is not public; they have access to the documents, is that right?

Ms. EGORIN. That is correct.

Mr. SWALWELL. You even asked them because of the nature of what they were looking at and the privacy of minors to not take any pictures or to publish anything of what they were looking at, is that right?

Ms. EGORIN. Congressman, it is common practice that because of the sensitive nature of these documents and the in camera review process that pictures are not taken and that they're handled in a highly sensitive manner, yes.

Mr. SWALWELL. Were pictures taken during that in camera review by Chair Jordan's staff?

Ms. EGORIN. It is my understanding that pictures were taken, and that is an unfortunate outcome.

Mr. SWALWELL. It is worse than an unfortunate outcome. It is violating the privacy of minors. Assistant Secretary, were those—were parts of that—of those documents that you showed Chair Jordan's staff published?

Ms. EGORIN. Congressman, it is my understanding that parts of those documents were in the report produced by the majority.

Mr. SWALWELL. Again this goes to a theme that we are seeing here. We talked about this last week with Hunter Biden's laptop. You violate an individual's privacy, you take nonconsensual pictures from that laptop, you use it to weaponize a case against your political opponent. Here we are talking about minors. You are asked not to take pictures of information regarding minors. You take the pictures and you put them out to the public.

Again, that is weird. I don't know why you would do that. It is also just creepy and it is wrong. Kids have their privacy violated to make a political point.

Assistant Secretary Durakoğlu, could you talk to me about what the Global Engagement Center is and why it is so important that the United States participates in it?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. Of course. Thank you, Congressman, for the question. The Global Engagement Center works to recognize, understand, and expose foreign propaganda against the United States and its allies. Most of this propaganda emanates from Beijing, Tehran, as well as Moscow. As well as non-State actors, I should add.

Mr. SWALWELL. Does your work include providing vital information to intelligence communities to ensure we have rapid responses to conflicts like the war in Ukraine?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. To be clear I actually don't work for the Global Engagement Center, but the center actually does have an inter-agency role and does work with the intelligence community, yes.

Mr. SWALWELL. Just based on your understanding of what the Global Engagement Center does and the State Department's role, what would happen if this program was discontinued?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. If the program was discontinued; and I should say it needs to be reauthorized before the end of 2024, we would not have this interagency arm that actually looks, collects, analyzes, and exposes disinformation. We would be—I guess we would be really not in a good position if that were to happen.

Mr. SWALWELL. Just based on your general review of foreign disinformation that attacks political parties in America, do you see a distinction between one party benefiting over another, or is it the case that both parties in America and many of the entities that we value in America are all susceptible and vulnerable to disinformation?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. Sir, again I'm not a subject matter expert on this issue, but I will say just from my own understanding these foreign propaganda arms do not discriminate.

Mr. SWALWELL. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. CLINE. I thank the gentleman.

The Committee now recognizes the gentlelady from Florida, Ms. Lee.

Ms. LEE. Good morning and welcome, Ms. Egorin. Thank you for being here with us today.

On June 2, 2023, the HHS ORR held a briefing regarding an internal audit it conducted following *The New York Times* investigation revealing allegations about labor trafficking and unaccompanied alien children, and that is where I would like to focus my questions here today.

During the briefing the Committee asked whether all the HHS ORR's internal processes were followed in the case of the unaccompanied alien child who ultimately murdered Kayla Hamilton or was charged with murder in Kayla Hamilton. Additionally, the Committee asked to review the audit in that case.

We are interested in the highest number of unaccompanied alien children that have been released to a single sponsor during the year 2023 and sent a message reiterating these requests for information on June 2, 2023. To date we have not received a response. Can you tell us when the Committee can expect to receive a response to this outstanding request?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. Congressman, thank you for acknowledging the accommodation and the briefing that was provided to your team. We are working in good faith to be responsive, but I do not have a date certain for you right now.

Ms. LEE. OK. On June 8, 2023, this Committee conducted a transcribed interview of the HHS ORR Director Robin Dunn Marcos. Dunn Marcos was unable to provide information or answer a series of the questions that were asked during that transcribed interview. About 30 questions approximately she was not able to answer.

For example, she couldn't answer questions about whether the office she leads has a policy to refer known gang members to the DOJ. She also wasn't sure during that interview whether during her tenure the HHS had ever transferred an alien child to a home where a registered sex offender lives, among other questions. So, we also were interested in how many unaccompanied alien children we lost track of during this administration.

So, during the interview she represented that the HHS would get back to us and provide us with answers following the interview, for those questions that they weren't able to answer at the time, that those answers would be provided to us subsequent to the interview. We are now 6 weeks later and the Committee does not have any update, or any supplemental answers and I am interested in whether you can tell us on what timeline we could expect to have that additional information.

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. Congresswoman, I am at this moment unaware of where we are in terms of a timeline. I'm happy to have my staff work with your staff and provide an update.

Ms. LEE. Are you the person who could best communicate with us about that? In other words, if we want to try to establish a timeline or get a sense of when we could expect these answers, are the right representative to be coordinating with on that subject?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. Yes, Congressman. I am the Assistant Secretary for Legislation. As I said in my testimony, it is my job to facilitate communications between Congress and the Department. I am happy to continue conversations and work in good faith to get you the answers.

Ms. LEE. On March 2, 2023, the Committee requested a general briefing on the unaccompanied children placement process and a demonstration of the UAC portal. It has been over four months and we have not received yet the briefing on that unaccompanied children placement process or a demonstration of the portal. Can you tell us on what timeline could we schedule that briefing? When could we expect to actually have that occur?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. Congresswoman, I will—when I go back to the office work, have my staff reach out to your office and start working through a process on that issue.

Ms. LEE. On March 31, 2023, the Committee requested that the Department provide four of the annual reports on the repatriation of unaccompanied alien children, statutorily required to be produced in this case under 8 U.S.C. 1232(a)(5)(c). Despite this report still being required to be produced we have only got two of the four. Do you have a timeline on when we could expect the remainder of those reports?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. Congresswoman, I would like to take that back and understand what two have been provided and the process for providing the last two.

Ms. LEE. All right. Mr. Chair, with that I yield back.

Mr. CLINE. I thank the gentlelady.

The gentleman from Maryland is recognized for five minutes.

Mr. IVEY. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I kind of want to start off where I left off at one of these previous hearings and sort of raising the issue again of the inefficiency of approaching these production issues in this way.

I think that a lot of the questions that have been posed have sounded like scheduling issues to me, frankly. When can we get this? When can we get that? When can my staff meet with your folks over there? I really don't think we need to be spending hearing time to do this.

This is particularly sticky for me this morning because I am actually missing a substantive hearing in another Judiciary Subcommittee. It is called the Right of Repair. I think Chair Issa is leading that. It is only I think the second substantive hearing I have done since I got on this Committee. All the others have been the weaponization stuff or this kind of a hearing about scheduling document productions and the like.

I will add this too to that point: I mean, just in looking through these—by the way, when we had the Whitewater hearings the majority and the minority actually worked together before they sent subpoenas out to make sure they didn't send over-broad requests. Obviously, they could have been voted out without doing that, as this Committee has done on all its subpoenas, I believe.

These document requests, we don't see them until later, but these requests for all the information—let me pull up one of them just to read it for the record.

All documents and communications from January 1, 2020, to the present referring to, relating to the moderation, deletion, suppression, restriction, or reduced circulation of content, development—or development, execution, or application of a company's content moderation policies, or a company's treatment of the accuracy or truth of content, or the attribution of content to the source of participation in a foreign or malign, or a state-sponsored influence.

Then it goes down, “All such documents and communications internal to the NIAID,” which is the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases,

All such documents and communications between or among the NIAID and any third-party groups, companies, or individuals, and all such documents and communications between or among the NIAID and any other executive entity.

That is a pretty broad request. As you just heard from the testimony a moment ago, they have to pull subject matter experts away from doing the work they are supposed to do; in this instance, I guess it is research with respect to infectious diseases, to answer these requests. It is like a snowball effect of constant requests that are coming to these agencies. I think there should be some kind of balance and recognition that they have a larger mission to serve.

Now, we have different views about the disinformation position. I get what you all are after, but as you heard a moment ago, disinformation is real and the United States is a major threat to us internationally. Foreign sources, as was just mentioned ago: Iran, China, and Russia. If we really want to go after disinformation, really shouldn't we start with the disinformation expert-in-Chief, or former-Chief, President Trump? Here is an article: "Trump made 30,573 false or misleading claims as president. Nearly half came in his final year." That is from *The Washington Post*, Glenn Kessler, January 23, 2021. I will offer it for the record.

Some of this was coronavirus would disappear. The one about bleach I thought was incredibly surprising. Hopefully you are not saying that this type of disinformation can't be challenged because I think it is certainly the government's place to do it.

Mr. CLINE. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. IVEY. With respect to—no. With respect to—well, I will yield—

Mr. CLINE. You are asking a question.

Mr. IVEY. I am sorry?

Mr. CLINE. You asked me a question.

Mr. IVEY. All right. With respect to the election fraud issues, which isn't the subject of this hearing, but really critical to the disinformation piece, we had false statements made about elections all the time. We have heard testimony in other places, because you sure won't hear it in the House Judiciary Committee, about State executives trying to find ways to preempt that in 2024. I don't mean like support this guy, support that guy. I mean stuff like this polling place isn't going to be open, that kind of stuff.

Where it is false, we need to address that and we need to recognize that the government should be able to address it. I mentioned at a previous hearing on the same sort of topics the tobacco industry and the fight against smoking, wearing seat belts, all these kinds of things are government efforts to put out correct information in response to frequently corporate or political misinformation to help the public safety.

I see my time has run over. Even including the interruption I have gone beyond that, but it is a plea for me to see if we can do more—we have gun violence ravaging the country. What have we had, like 300-plus mass killings this year so far? This is the Committee that is supposed to hear those issues and do something about it. We haven't done one hearing on it.

So, if we could—I know you guys have to do this and you want to focus on it to some extent, but is it possible that we could do some kind of work that addresses the major concerns, like gun violence, that are sweeping the country, ravaging communities, and we're not even discussing it? With that I yield back.

Mr. CLINE. The gentleman from New Jersey is recognized for five minutes.

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just to answer your question quickly, perhaps if we didn't let people in and out of prison, lower felonies to misdemeanors, and generally not obey the rule of the law, we would have a lot less gun violence. The issue with gun violence is that we want to do something to make obviously our country safer, but we also don't want to harm those who are legal gun owners who abide by the law and do no harm.

Our answers always seems to be in this body, in this Congress that we go after the decent law-abiding citizens, but those that have illegal guns, who steal guns, who commit crimes we are not worried about that anymore. So, that is my sense of that issue.

I wanted to go on—

Mr. IVEY. Would the gentleman yield for a question?

Mr. VAN DREW. I can't on this and I am sorry. I would like to if they gave us a little longer, so I apologize, but—

Mr. IVEY. Yes, sir.

Mr. VAN DREW. —there are a few questions I wanted to ask. I have been doing a lot of talking already, so I am going to try my best with your name. Ms. Durakoğlu?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. [No response.]

Mr. VAN DREW. OK. Thank you. Thank you for being here. I have to admit it was only recently that the State Department's Global Engagement Center came to my attention. I have been in government a long time, 25 years, and I have been here in Congress for five years, yet it seems every day I am still learning of yet another office in our government tasked with the responsibility of censoring Americans on social media all under the guise of national security.

So, quickly, can you please answer the following for me? I am sorry that it has to be quick. Again, I would have loved to have taken his question. I would love if we had more time, but this is a system we have for good reason, otherwise we would be here for 10 hours.

Can you please answer the following: What is the purpose of the Global Engagement Center if not an instrument at times for censoring free speech the Administration doesn't like? I need you to do it quickly because I have a few other questions.

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. Sir, the Global Engagement Center does not engage in the domestic information space whatsoever and they do not censor information or engage in content moderation. What they do is they analyze, identify, and expose foreign propaganda.

Mr. VAN DREW. What authority is the GEC using to determine what constitutes the truth on social media?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. The GEC was Congressionally mandated by a bipartisan bill in 2016, so I would refer to that bill.

Mr. VAN DREW. OK. Do you know the authority or are you just going to simply say it was Congressionally—

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. They actually do not engage in the domestic information space whatsoever.

Mr. VAN DREW. Not at all?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. No.

Mr. VAN DREW. What is the budget of the GEC and how many people are working on this?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. So, I know there are approximately 100 employees in GEC, but in terms of its budget I would have to refer you to the GEC itself. They're more than happy to brief any Members of this Committee.

Mr. VAN DREW. OK. So you don't know any idea of the actual budget?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. I don't know their budget, no.

Mr. VAN DREW. Yes or no, is the State Department operating any other similar offices whose goal is to censor speech deemed as untruthful or simply unpopular?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. No.

Mr. VAN DREW. I have to give it to you, I very seldom get a direct answer from anybody.

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. Well, I am a fellow Rutgers alum, sir, so maybe it has something to do with it.

[Laughter.]

Mr. VAN DREW. Yes, so when you are in Jersey, you are tough and you are straightforward.

The current administration's relentless encroachment on our First Amendment rights is deeply concerning to me. It is especially unnerving considering that the President of the Department, Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, orchestrated the intelligence community letter that was used to undermine the Hunter Biden laptop story leading to censorship of the *New York Post* story on this matter. So, there is a concerning pattern of suppressing speech coming from the leadership of this administration. Maybe it is not you, but Anthony Blinken has a lot to answer for.

It seems evident that nearly every agency from the State Department to the HHS and the DOJ is embroiled in efforts in some way to suppress free speech on nearly every topic. This effort extends to external groups like the Alliance for Securing Democracy, the Atlantic Council, the Global Disinformation Index, the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, and I assume countless others that I probably don't even know.

Given the government's overwhelming involvement in looking into American's conversations, it is crucial that this Committee rigorously exercise its oversight role and its responsibility because I find it very hard to believe that these actions haven't also ensnared a considerable number of innocent Americans.

That is why on April 18th the Committee submitted a letter to Secretary Blinken requesting documents and information relating to the Department's possible coercion and collusion with companies and other intermediaries to stifle free speech. We are still waiting, we are still waiting for a response to that request.

Yes or no, can you provide an estimate for when the Committee can expect to receive these documents? If nothing is wrong, if everything is good, if everything is right, you should want to turn them all over.

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. Sir, we actually did respond and we've provided four productions that equals nearly 1,200 pages, but it's on a rolling basis and we expect to provide more.

Mr. VAN DREW. My understanding there is much, much more that we didn't receive and we would love an accurate accounting of that, because that is also Congress' job and responsibility.

Say yes or no, can the State Department guarantee the delivery of unredacted documents as per our request by August 1st?

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. Sir, we provide everything, and some of that includes redactions, but we're happy to work with your staff on an accommodations process on those redactions.

Mr. VAN DREW. I hope you will.

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. Yes.

Mr. VAN DREW. I hope you really mean that. I hope it is only redacted when it is matters of national security. It has been this Committee's experience that constantly areas are redacted, and not just with you folks, but in general, that just don't know the need to be and it is not national security. So, I hope you will.

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. Congressman, can I respond to that?

Mr. VAN DREW. Yes.

Ms. DURAKOĞLU. I personally reviewed the four tranches that we provided to this Committee and I could say the vast majority is not redacted. When it is, it's due to personnel information privacy. Some of the implementers of the Global Engagement Center have faced threats from foreign actors and that's the reason why the redactions are there.

Mr. VAN DREW. I appreciate that. Just to close up, there are so many different departments, so many different agencies, so many people looking into for lack of a term personal stuff and personal freedoms. The most important freedom, more than security, is to have freedom. Freedom is more important than security. If we give up our freedom in America, we have given up everything. I fiercely believe that. I thank you. I yield back.

Mr. CLINE. I thank the gentleman.

I want to thank our witnesses. I am going to take my five minutes. The CDC has a central role in setting COVID-19 guidelines and deeming itself the arbiter of truth of claims associated with the disease, but common sense dictates that there are far more than 1,691 substantive pages of documents with the agency's possession. Additionally, the HHS has redacted names in the documents produced including the names of CDC personnel obstructing the Committee's efforts to identify key players in the CDC tech censorship regime.

On April 28, 2023, the Committee subpoenaed the CDC for documents and information related to this coordination and collusion. As I said, we have received only 1,691 substantive pages. It is wholly inadequate, wholly incomplete and inadequate.

Assistant Secretary Egorin, why has the CDC failed to produce all or at least many more responsive documents given the May 22nd deadline in the subpoena?

Ms. EGORIN. Congressman, we have produced, as you noted, almost 2,000 pages in response to the letters and subpoena and we produced additional pages just last week. We continue to be responsive and work in good faith as information moves forward.

Mr. CLINE. Now, the Subcommittee compels the production of various additional categories of documents as well. For example, certain documents and communications between or among the CDC

and the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government. The subpoena compels the production of documents internal to the CDC as well. Would you not agree that the HHS has not produced all documents responsive to the subpoena?

Ms. EGORIN. Congressman, we continue to work in good faith to be responsive to your oversight requests. So, we produce—

Mr. CLINE. Would you agree that, thus far, you have not been completely responsive?

Ms. EGORIN. Congressman, so far we've produced 2,000 pages and we continue to work in good faith as we work through our process of identifying documents.

Mr. CLINE. Have you produced any documents or communications between or among the CDC and Executive Branch agencies?

Ms. EGORIN. Congressman, I do not have the productions in front of me, so I would like to be able to get back to you on that.

Mr. CLINE. I can tell you the exact number. Zero. So, zero pages of communications and documents between or among the CDC and Executive Branch agencies. Can you give us some idea of why you are differentiating between and essentially being selective in which documents you have decided to produce and which you haven't?

Ms. EGORIN. Congressman, we are not being selective. We are working to produce documents in a timely manner.

Mr. CLINE. OK.

Ms. EGORIN. We've done four productions to date and we will continue to work in good faith to produce additional documents.

Mr. CLINE. I am just curious because, leaving an entire category of internal documents aside and not producing a single page, you would think we would at least get some recognition that that category of information is important. Do you consider it to be important?

Ms. EGORIN. Congressman, I'm not making value judgments of what's more important or less important to the Committee. I'm happy to talk to you about prioritization of documents, but also want to recognize that we have produced 2,000 pages in response to this request and continue to work in good faith and work through our processes to identify documents.

Mr. CLINE. I am told one of the productions was a total of 61 pages. Does that seem like drip, drip, drip delay?

Ms. EGORIN. So, Congressman, I'm going to judge—or I'm going to say that our team continues to work through our processes, and rather than sit and hold information, continue to produce, as my colleague said, in a rolling basis.

Mr. CLINE. So, other categories of the subpoena specifically refer to documents sufficient to show the persons and individuals who are or have been responsible in any way or that the CDC has cooperated with, consulted with, or relied on formally or informally in, quote,

... developing, applying, executing, implementing, or communicating the CDC's policies, views, or concerns relating to the moderation, deletion, suppression, restriction, or reduced circulation of content.

The HHS' production thus far has redacted the names in emails of employees and third parties. Can you confirm that you are redacting and can you confirm that you will produce unredacted copies of these documents?

Ms. EGORIN. Congressman, I can confirm that there are redactions within the documents. Redactions exist for many reasons including personal identifying information. We take the safety of our employees and individuals very seriously and—

Mr. CLINE. As do we. I am going to end. I have got 20 seconds left. Shifting gears a little bit. We are not going to do second round, but I want all of you to be aware, and I am going to submit for the record a letter that the Chair, Chair Jordan wrote to Director Wray of the FBI, who we have also had difficulties getting information from, but letting him know that it is not acceptable, that we are done waiting, and that this Committee is going to be taking action against him and those who continue to delay and obfuscate and refuse to provide that information.

Mr. CLINE. So, we look forward to hopefully getting that information from the both of you. We look forward to hopefully not having to take further action to encourage the production of those documents.

With that, the Subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10:55 a.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

All materials submitted for the record by Members of the Subcommittee on Responsiveness and Accountability to Oversight can be found at: <https://docs.house.gov/Committee/Calendar/ByEvent.aspx?EventID=116231>.

