JAMES COMER, KENTUCKY
CHAIRMAN

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

ROBERT GARCIA, CALIFORNIA
RANKING MEMBER

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

November 18, 2026

Ms. Catherine Townsend
President and Chief Executive Officer
Trust for the National Mall
1717 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 250
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Ms. Townsend:

Oversight Democrats are investigating the construction of the ballroom on the White House campus financed in part by donations from private entities via the Trust for the National Mall.[1] After packing the commissions that would approve construction of such major projects with political loyalists and White House staff, the President is—in violation of Congress's Constitutional authority over federal property—using more than $600 million drawn from both private donors with business before the government and taxpayer money to build his ballroom, raising significant concerns about corruption and pay-to-play schemes.[2] Voters gave Congressional Democrats a sweeping mandate to root out corruption and ensure that the government is accountable to the people. We intend to act on that mandate in the 120th Congress by conducting the critically important oversight essential for legislative reform. Oversight

[1] Letter from Ranking Member Robert Garcia, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to Catherine Townsend, Trust for the National Mall (Oct. 31, 2025) (on file with the Committee); Letter from Ranking Member Jared Huffman, Committee on Natural Resources, Ranking Member Robert Garcia, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and Ranking Member Yassamin Ansari, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, Committee on Natural Resources, to President Donald Trump (Oct. 23, 2025) (online at https://democrats-naturalresources.house.gov/imo/media/doc/ballroom_construction_letter_to_white_house.pdf); Letter from Senator Elizabeth Warren and Ranking Member Robert Garcia, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to Comptroller Jessica Bowron, National Park Service, et. al. (Feb. 18, 2026) (online at https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/imo/media/doc/garcia_warren_follow_up_letter_to_nps_rewhballroom.pdf).

[2] See *Secret Documents Reveal Donors Behind $330 Million for Trump's Ballroom*, Washington Post (Oct. 15, 2026) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/2026/10/15/secret-documents-reveal-donors-behind-330-million-trumps-ballroom/); see *Millions in Secret Service Funds Redirected Amid Ballroom Construction*, Washington Post (June 18, 2026) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/2026/06/18/budget-office-redirects-352m-secret-service-funds-white-house-security/); see Brief of Members of Congress as *Amici Curiae* in Support of Respondent (Aug. 18, 2026), *National Park Service et. al. v. National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States*, (Sup. Ct. No. 26A203) (online at https://www.supremecourt.gov/DocketPDF/26/26A203/419329/20260818095315624_Members%20Amici%20Brief%20-%20Natl%20Trust%20U.S.%20Stay%20PDFA%20-%20FILED.pdf); Democrats, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, *Shadow Hearing on Monumental Waste: How Donald Trump Is Spending Millions Destroying American Landmarks*, 119th Cong. (July 21, 2026) (online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=yUo2kyvQzE4).

Democrats demand that you respond to our outstanding requests and preserve all records, communications, and information related to the financing and construction of the White House ballroom.

Public reporting indicates that financing for the ballroom project is provided by private donors via the Trust for the National Mall, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization acting as a middleman by taking in hundreds of millions of dollars in donations that will then be used to fund the project.[3] Many donations to the ballroom construction fund appear to come from powerful corporate interests with business before the government.[4] For example, Nvidia Corporation donated millions to the Trust for the National Mall shortly after receiving permission from the Trump Administration to sell advanced microchips to the People's Republic of China, as well as a favorable decision from the Department of Commerce closing an investigation into the company.[5] Despite this, little is known about the ballroom's financing structure or the parameters of the project. In an effort to explore the legal and ethical concerns around this project, we previously requested information from the Trust about its involvement with the construction project. Rather than comply with our investigation, the Trust has outright failed to comply with our demands for information or respond to our inquiries.[6]

Given the gravity of the project and allegations of pay-to-play, Oversight Democrats intend to continue our investigation into the Trust's role in the project. We demand that you immediately respond to our prior requests for information, preserve all records relevant in any way to these matters, and preserve all such materials on an ongoing basis. This request extends to official and personal communications that may be relevant to these matters, and to any such information in the possession of your agents, employees, and associated entities. Inform us immediately if you are or become aware of any attempt to destroy, conceal, or fail to preserve such information.

Americans should be secure in the knowledge that their government is focused on their best interests—not on the President's vanity projects. The American people have spoken, and they demand accountability.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate "any matter" at

---

[3] *Nonprofit Collecting Funds for Trump's Ballroom Rakes in $320 Million, Including Nonpublic Donations*, NBC News (Oct. 9, 2026) (online at www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/trump-ballroom-nonprofit-320-million-anonymous-donors-national-mall-rcna602610).

[4] *Secret Documents Reveal Donors Behind $330 Million for Trump's Ballroom*, Washington Post (Oct. 15, 2026) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/2026/10/15/secret-documents-reveal-donors-behind-330-million-trumps-ballroom/).

[5] *Secret Documents Reveal Donors Behind $330 Million for Trump's Ballroom*, Washington Post (Oct. 15, 2026) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/2026/10/15/secret-documents-reveal-donors-behind-330-million-trumps-ballroom/); *Commerce Dept. Chip Inquiry Was Halted After Nvidia Intervention*, New York Times (Nov. 9, 2026) (online at www.nytimes.com/2026/11/09/business/economy/nvidia-megaspeed-investigation-huang.html).

[6] Letter from Catherine Townsend, Trust for the National Mall, to Ranking Member Robert Garcia, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (Nov. 7, 2025) (on file with the Committee).

"any time" under House Rule X. If you have any questions about this request, please contact Committee Democratic staff at (202) 225-5051. Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.[7]

Sincerely,

Robert Garcia
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

[7] House rule X, clause 4(c)(2).