

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 13, 2025

Bridget Bean
Executive Director
Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security
Agency
1110 N. Glebe Road
Arlington, VA 20598-0630

Mona Harrington
Assistant Director for the National Risk
Management Center
Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security
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1110 N. Glebe Road
Arlington, VA 20598-0630

Dear Ms. Bean and Ms. Harrington:

We write to express grave concern about recent reporting that employees at the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) in the Election Security and Resilience division, including individuals who previously worked on addressing the risks posed by election mis- and disinformation, as well as foreign influence operations, were notified on February 6, 2025, that they were being placed on administrative leave.¹ Furthermore, public reporting notes that two of these individuals “stopped working on mis-, dis- and malinformation over a year ago,”² raising significant concerns about how CISA is identifying which employees are being placed on leave.

As you know, a key component of CISA’s mission is to serve as a resource and partner for state and local election officials by identifying and providing resources to address physical and cyber threats to election infrastructure as a part of critical infrastructure. CISA’s establishing legislation clearly directs it to work on elections, with a directive to “coordinate a national effort to secure and protect against critical infrastructure risks” and to “provide analyses, expertise, and other technical assistance to critical infrastructure owners and operators.”³

Election-related mis- and disinformation from domestic and foreign actors continues to threaten the strength and integrity of our democracy by weakening trust in our elections and promoting falsehoods about election officials that have resulted in threats against them and their families. Understanding the trends in misinformation and providing state and local officials with the tools to counter it is critical to protecting and supporting the effective and secure administration of our elections. CISA’s recent actions, coupled with the disturbing move by Attorney General Pam Bondi to dissolve the FBI task force that worked to uncover covert efforts by Russia, China, Iran and other foreign adversaries to manipulate U.S. voters, makes our elections more vulnerable to attacks by foreign adversaries.⁴

¹ John Sakellariadis and Maggie Miller, *Trump Continues federal purge, gutting cyber workers who combat disinformation*, Politico (Feb, 7, 2025), <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/02/07/trump-guts-cyber-workers-00203087>.

² *Id.*

³ Pub. L. No. 115–278, tit. XXII, § 2202(c)(4-5), 132 Stat. 4168.

⁴ Colby Itkowitz et al., *Trump administration cuts teams that fight foreign election interference*, Wash. Post (Feb. 8, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/02/08/trump-administration-cuts-election-security-teams/>.

The removal of these employees raises significant questions as to CISA's continued commitment to election-related work, particularly as the notifications followed CISA's notable absence from two conferences for election officials in Washington, D.C.

Out of significant concern for the future of the agency's work with election officials and safeguarding elections as critical infrastructure, we request responses to the following questions no later than February 28, 2025.

1. How many employees at CISA have been placed on administrative leave, what were their current positions, and what duties were these employees currently assigned?
2. How many employees at CISA currently work on election security?
3. In total, how many employees at CISA currently working on election security have been placed on administrative leave? Do you anticipate additional employees working on election security to be placed on administrative leave, to be directed to undertake other non-election security-related duties, or otherwise impacted by changes in their work?
4. Which contracts have been terminated and how many contract employees are no longer working on election security?
5. What direction has CISA been given by the Department of Homeland Security, the White House, or the Department of Government Efficiency towards the treatment of employees in positions relating to elections?
6. Were employees at CISA given guidance not to attend conferences or to limit other public-facing engagements, including meetings, related to elections or with election officials?
7. Has any guidance been provided to employees on their engagement with election officials? If so, what is CISA's current guidance?
8. What work is currently ongoing to secure elections and support election officials?
9. What assessment is being done to evaluate CISA's work during the 2024 election cycle?
10. What work is being done to combat the ongoing threat of election-related mis- and disinformation?

Regardless of party affiliation, all Americans deserve and expect free and fair elections. Thank you for your attention to this serious matter.

Sincerely,



Alex Padilla
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Committee
on Rules and Administration



Joseph D. Morelle
Member of Congress
Ranking Member, Committee
on House Administration