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NOMINATION OF HON. KRISTI NOEM

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

NOMINATION OF HON. KRISTI NOEM TO BE SECRETARY,
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

JANUARY 17, 2025

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NOMINATION OF HON. KRISTI NOEM

FRIDAY, JANUARY 17, 2025

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:01 a.m., in room SD–342, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Rand Paul, Chair of the Committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Paul [presiding], Johnson, Lankford, Rick Scott, Hawley, Moreno, Ernst, Peters, Hassan, Blumenthal, Kim, Gallego, and Slotkin.

Also present: Senators Thune and Cramer.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR PAUL

Chairman PAUL. The hearing to consider the nomination of Kristi Noem to be Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will now come to order

The Department of Homeland Security, with 260,000 employees and nearly 20 distinct components, epitomizes in many ways unchecked power. Its vast responsibilities from border security, and disaster response, to counter-terrorism, and cybersecurity, demand rigorous scrutiny to ensure that they are executed within the bounds of the Constitution and with respect to the freedoms of the American people.

Nearly two years ago, when I became the Ranking Member of this Committee, my team sought to understand the extent of this bureaucratic labyrinth. We asked DHS for a comprehensive list of collaborative entities it participates in, task forces, advisory boards, coalitions, commissions, and the like.

The response was astonishingly opaque. They stated there is not a single comprehensive list to address all the collaborative relationships that the department and its components engage in. In other words, we do so much stuff and we are so big, we cannot describe it for you. But if we cannot describe what we have, we got a problem.

In plain language, DHS had really no idea. Think about it. An agency commanding over $110 billion annually cannot account for its own activities. This is not just bureaucratic incompetence. It's emblematic of a deeper issue; an agency unsure of its own boundaries and commitments. How can an agency fulfill its mission or earn the American people's trust if it does not even know the extent of its own operations?

But the problems do not stop there. Instead of focusing on critical threats like securing the Southwest border, DHS has shifted its gaze inward targeting law abiding Americans. DHS under the Biden Administration has often used its vast powers to target Americans exercising their constitutional rights. It's become an agency more focused on policing speech, monitoring social media, and labeling political dissent as domestic terrorism than addressing genuine security threats.

While cartels traffic people and fentanyl across an unguarded border, DHS has spent its time and resources creating partisan disinformation boards, spying on Americans through invasive surveillance technologies. The mission drift is dangerous. Every dollar spent monitoring law abiding citizens is a dollar not spent securing the homeland. Every moment spent targeting political opponents is a moment not addressing real threats like border security, cyberattacks, or the rising influence of adversarial nation-states.

The priorities of DHS have been deeply distorted, and the American people are paying the price. What about DHS's response to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID–19), arguably one of the greatest threats to Homeland Security. The answer is clear. Nothing. They knew nothing of the origins. They did not study the issue, and they had no information about gain-of-function (GOF) research.

We have seen firsthand how unchecked government overreach leads to waste, fraud, and abuse. We cannot let DHS become yet another agency that operates behind a veil of secrecy. The American people deserve transparency, accountability, and leadership that puts national security and liberty hand-in-hand, not at odds with each other.

Today, we gather to consider the nomination of Governor Kristi Noem to serve as the Secretary of Department of Homeland Security. I hope this hearing will set the tone for this Committee's work in the new Congress to restore transparency and accountability to an Executive Branch that has grown unchecked.

Governor Noem, if confirmed, you will lead an agency that has lost its way. Your record as Governor of South Dakota, and a former Member of Congress demonstrates your willingness to make difficult decisions in the face of significant political pressure, and to put the interest of the American people first. You have the opportunity today to address how your background and vision will translate to leading one of the most critical and scrutinized departments in the Federal Government.

This is the first of many consequential moments for this Committee. As we renew our commitment to the constitutional oversight role that Congress must assert. I have no doubt that the nominees we will consider in the coming weeks and months will be up for the challenge.

Governor Noem, thank you for your willingness to serve, and I yield to the Ranking Member for his opening remarks.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR PETERS[1]

Senator PETERS. Thank you, Chair Paul, Governor Noem, it's great to see you here today. I want to first thank you for making

[1] The prepared statement of Senator Peters appears in the Appendix on page 53.

yourself available not only to the entire Committee, but the discussions that we had in my office, going perhaps a little more in depth in the issues than is possible in a hearing like this. Having that open and frank conversation is something that I appreciate. I also appreciate your willingness to spend time with Committee staff as we conduct our due diligence and review of your qualifications and a background to serve as Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

As our third largest Federal agency with more than 240,000 employees and an operating budget of more than $100 billion, the Department of Homeland Security requires strong, stable, and principled leadership. Our nation faces serious threats and security challenges from securing our borders, and combating terrorism, to preventing cyberattacks, and responding to our nation's increasing number of natural disasters. DHS is the first line of defense in all of those areas.

I appreciated the conversations we had at today's hearing where we discussed the importance of ensuring that our nation's borders are safe and secure. While we must address the significant challenges we face on the Southern border, we also need to ensure that there are sufficient resources to secure our Northern border, something I know you are very familiar with as the Governor of your State, including building out our Northern Border Mission Center. This is especially important in my home State of Michigan, which has two of the nation's busiest border crossings, and we are going to be adding another span shortly, the Gordie Howe International Bridge, which will open later this year.

To facilitate the lawful trade and travel of through those ports of entry (POE) that are absolutely critical to our economy, I have worked on legislation to hire additional U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers to meet increased staffing demands. We must secure our borders, but we also know it is well time passed to streamline our immigration and our asylum process as well.

In addition to border security, DHS is responsible for addressing many threats that face our Nation. Just a few weeks ago, unfortunately, Americans were shocked to see two horrific incidents in New Orleans and Las Vegas. A deadly reminder that terrorism and radicalization remain very real and ongoing threats to our homeland. In my role on this Committee, I have made combating foreign and domestic terrorism, as well as extremism a top priority.

In this complex environment, it is essential that DHS continue to focus on all terrorism threats, track, and report data to Congress and to the American people, and coordinate between all components to ensure the department is effectively addressing all types of terrorist threats. We have also seen the persistent cyberattacks are still a very serious threat. In fact, an increasing threat. A recent attack from Chinese-based hackers infiltrated the Treasury Department on top of ongoing Salt Typhoon hack that comprised numerous U.S. telecommunications companies.

There's no question that DHS must continue to lead the way in protecting our networks from foreign adversaries, cyber criminals, and so-called hacktivists to prevent cyberattacks from becoming increasingly devastating to our security as well as to our economy.

Finally, the Department of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) must continue to work hard to address the increasing number of natural disasters affecting our communities as a result of climate change from violent storms like hurricanes that brought destruction to States across the south, to the devastating wildfires in California, and countless other severe storms and flooding events all across our country.

We need leadership at the Department that will ensure our nation effectively responds to communities when disaster strikes them. The safety and security of our nation and the American people depend on the department's ability to effectively address these wide-ranging threats.

Governor Noem, thank you, again, for your willingness to serve in this incredibly important position. Thank you for being here today. I look forward to having a comprehensive discussion about how you intend to lead this critical department through a series of national security challenges, if indeed you are confirmed.

Chairman PAUL. This morning, Governor Noem will be introduced by Majority Leader John Thune, and Senator Kevin Cramer. Senator Thune, you are recognized.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR THUNE

Senator THUNE. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and Ranking Member Peters, and Members of the Committee. I am very pleased to be able to be here today to introduce South Dakota's outstanding Governor who has been nominated by President Trump to serve as a Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

I have known Kristi Noem for a long time. She has a very compelling personal and family story, which inspired her entrance into the public arena, and I am sure you will hear a little bit more about that from her. But I have observed as she has gone through the State legislature as a leader there, State House of Representatives, the U.S. House of Representatives, where she was our only member from South Dakota representing our State's interests there for eight years, and now currently South Dakota's Governor.

I think she brings to this job a number of things that are going to be really essential, and one is obviously a skillset when it comes to managing hard problems. She led our State through the pandemic, managed what were extraordinary circumstances all across this country in a way that made South Dakota, frankly, a magnet for people from other States who are trying to flee or get away from some of the heavy-handed requirements that were imposed in other States around the country. Our State stayed an open State, free, and that was largely due to her leadership.

I would say, too, as we tackle what is an enormously complicated and hard issue, which is our Southern border. It's going to require a skillset, which I believe she possesses. It's going to require a tremendous amount of persistence and determination which I think she has an enormous amount of energy, which she has an abundance. Frankly, what I would say is just absolute toughness. It's going to take some tough and hard leadership to get things back in order.

I want to refer to something she said in her State of the State address earlier this week to South Dakotans. That over the past

four years, we have seen a complete disregard for the security of our borders and the safety of the American people, to say nothing for the rule of law. Chaos at our Southern borderer under the Biden Administration's left our country vulnerable to a whole host of security concerns, from terrorist entries to cross border criminal activity like drug trafficking.

I think it's well-documented, and I think it's high time that it gets fixed. We have somebody nominated by the President that I believe has the capabilities, the qualities, the experience, and again, frankly, the determination and toughness to solve what is a very tough issue, one which is desperately in need of solutions.

I am pleased to be able to be here today to introduce our great Governor, and to thank you for her consideration. I look forward to this Committee acting on her nomination, and I look forward to voting for her on the floor of the U.S. Senate to be the next Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman PAUL. Senator Cramer?

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR CRAMER

Senator CRAMER. Thank you, Chairman Paul, Ranking Member Peters, and colleagues.

Once again, I find myself in full agreement with the Majority leader. It's a good place to be in our business. This is a very special opportunity for me. First thing I want to do is thank nearly all of you. I got into almost every one of your offices with Kristi as her very amateurish sitting Senator Sherpa.

The blessing for me was not only to be with my good friend and former colleague, but to learn a lot about this Committee that I am not on, and to get an inside view. Gary, especially learning how we can work together at the Northern border, and how similar, although very different, Michigan and North Dakota are. So, thank you for your hospitality. You were all very kind to Kristi and to me.

But Kristi is a former colleague. When you are the only member of a body of 435 from an entire State, it's really important to have friends. So, together, Kristi and I were two out of 435. If we could get Montana, Wyoming, and Alaska, there would be five of us that could take on the fight. But I know this, I remember our very first year, my first year, it was not hers. My first year in the House, the unthinkable happened, and the House of Representatives failed to pass a Farm Bill.

All I can tell you was the least secure homeland person in America was the speaker of the House and the Majority leader. The next day when Kristi and I doubled-up and eventually we got a Farm Bill done, I say that because we are living at a time, and Senator Peters you used the words, "Strong, stable, and principled." I cannot think of three better words to describe Kristi Noem than those three words.

I would add this. I am not surprised that President Trump turned to Governor Noem. Securing the homeland is the No. 1 priority. Our No. 1 priority, our No. 1 constitutional priority as a Congress. It is for sure the No. 1 priority of the voters in the last election. It is the No. 1 priority for President Donald Trump.

Naturally, he would say, "Who is the toughest, smartest, most capable protector that I know? I think I would like to find a ranch woman, mom, grandmother, who knows how to protect her own." When you grow up on a ranch in the prairies or the West, nobody else is going to look out for your critters, no one else is protecting your family. You do it.

She brings this skillset, as Senator Thune said, as a leader, as a legislator, as a Member of Congress, as a Governor. A very important—by the way, when I would get into the room with other Governors, Senator Hassan, I might as well have just left because I was now part of the club where I do not belong. But anyway, it was very rich because there's an alliance there that's really important. For me, it's just a really special opportunity to be able to be here with her, and to have had this time in your offices introducing her to you.

But I want to wrap up because last night I received a very touching letter, unsolicited by either Kristi or me, from the tribal chairwoman from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, which straddles North Dakota and South Dakota. They do not really care who wins the South Dakota State, North Dakota State football game, but they do care about their reservation.

Chairwoman Alkire sent me this letter, Standing Rock is the home of Sitting Bull. In case you were wondering about the credentials of their ability to protect the homeland, I will just read a few words. "On multiple occasions, Governor Noem has invited the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe to her table at the South Dakota State Capitol to enter into meaningful discussions." That's what I witnessed when she came to your offices.

Janet writes, "It is of great excitement and enthusiasm that our North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum, will be at the helm of the Department of Interior (DOI). My hopes remain high that you will feel the same about Governor Kristi Noem at the helm of the Department of Homeland Security." These two Governors understand the needs in Indian country, and what words like tribal sovereignty, jurisdiction, and consultation mean to the indigenous people. It speaks volumes to her leadership and to her character."

It's my honor to support her and turn it over to her. Thank you.

Chairman PAUL. Thank you for those great introductions. The Committee has also received several statements in support of Governor Noem's nomination, including a letter from 22 fellow Governors, the International Association of Firefighters, and six other organizations. Without objection, these letters of support will be made part of the hearing record.[1]

I know our Senators are going to have to go, but thank you for coming and doing those introductions.

It's the practice of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee (HSGAC) to swear in witnesses. Governor Noem, please stand and raise your right hand. Do you swear that the testimony you will give before this Committee will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you, God?

Ms. NOEM. I do.

[1] The letters of support for Ms. Noem appears in the Appendix on page 191.

Chairman PAUL. Governor Noem, you are now recognized for your opening statement.

TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE KRISTI NOEM,[1] TO BE SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Ms. NOEM. Thank you and good morning, Chairman Paul, Ranking Member Peters, and the distinguished Members of this Committee.

I am honored to appear before all of you today as the nominee for the Secretary of Homeland Security. I want to thank President-elect Donald J. Trump for his confidence in my leadership, and the people of South Dakota for their fantastic support throughout my time in public service.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to Senator Cramer. He has been an invaluable resource to me throughout this process and given me much wisdom, as well as insight into the thoughts and the procedures of the Senate and this body. I would also like to express my gratitude to Senator Thune, the Majority leader of this esteemed body. He's been an advisor to me for many years as well as a friend. I am so grateful for the generous support of these two men, and their willingness to be here this morning to speak on my behalf, and to introduce me to this Committee.

Now, I am a wife and a mother, and a grandmother, a farmer, rancher, and business person. I have served in our State legislature, in Congress for eight years, and also a Governor. I have spent my entire life in rural America. I understand what it means to work hard every single day and to build a better future for your kids and for all of our communities. I come before you today with a deep sense of responsibility and a humility as the nominee to lead the Department of Homeland Security, and also a commitment to the more than 330 Americans who we will work together to help serve, and to keep safe and secure in their homes and in their communities.

Now, before I proceed, I want to introduce to you my husband Bryon, who's here with me today. He is my constant 24/7 reminder of our dedication to public service, and that it's not a solo effort or done alone. He has been a rock by my side, and I appreciate all of his love over so many years. I am grateful that he's here with me today.

Now, securing our homeland is a serious, sacred trust that must be relentlessly pursued and can never be taken for granted. Being safe within our borders here in America is critical, and yet Americans feel less safe than they have felt in decades. For the first time in 30 years, more than 40 percent of Americans are afraid to walk alone at night within a mile of their homes.

President-elect Trump is going to change that. I have seen firsthand the challenges and the opportunities facing our great nation. In the 20 years since the Department of Homeland Security was formed, the nature of the threats to our homeland has grown and they have evolved. This department was created in response to the failures of the government that led to the September 11, 2011, ter-

[1] The prepared statement of Ms. Noem appears in the Appendix on page 55.

rorist attacks. That reality is not lost on me, especially in the wake of the recent terrorist attacks over New Years.

Now, I have led South Dakota for the last six years with a focus every day on making our State safer, stronger, and freer. I focused every day on making the best decisions, not just for right now, but for generations to come. I have overseen a State budget of over $7 billion, and a State employee workforce of more than 13,000, including more than 7,000 that report directly to the Governor.

I have addressed important issues like cybersecurity, human trafficking, drug interdiction, and also natural disasters, the same challenges that are facing so many of you and the people that you represent back home. I have secured our State and supported the rule of law. If confirmed as the eighth Secretary, that is the same approach that I will take to leading the Department of Homeland Security.

As we face the evolving threats of the 21st century, the mission and the success of DHS is more critical than ever. We must be vigilant, and proactive, and innovative to protect the homeland. The challenges in front of us are extremely significant, and we must secure our borders against illegal trafficking and immigration. We must safeguard our critical infrastructure to make sure that we are protected against cyberattacks, respond to natural disasters, and also terrorism.

I firmly believe that we can meet those challenges head on with resolve innovation. We can use collaboration with Federal and with State partners. Senators, I want your input. Border security must remain a top priority. As a Nation, we have the right and the responsibility to secure our borders against those who would do us harm. We must create a fair and a lawful immigration system that is efficient, and is effective, and that reflects our values.

President Trump was elected with a clear mandate. He needs to achieve this mission because two-thirds of Americans support his immigration and border policies, including the majority of Hispanic Americans. I was the first Governor to send National Guard troops to our Southern border when Texas asked for help and when they were being overwhelmed by an unprecedented border crisis. If confirmed as Secretary, I will ensure that our exceptional, extraordinary border patrol agents have all the tools, and resources, and support that they need to carry out their mission effectively.

The same is true of my commitment to the outstanding men and women of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). They are responsible for apprehending, detaining, and deporting illegal immigrants. Getting criminal aliens off of our streets and out of the country will help American communities be safer again. The bravery and the dedication of the Border Patrol and ICE are unmatched, and I will restore dignity to their work.

The rising threat of cyberattacks also demands our utmost attention, and our critical infrastructure from energy grids to financial institutions is under constant attack by foreign adversaries and criminal actors. As Secretary, I will prioritize a comprehensive whole-of-government approach to cybersecurity.

In fact, in the coming days, we have to plan bigger, and think faster and smarter. I fully acknowledge that people in Washington, DC do not have all of the answers, and therefore, I will leverage

private-public partnerships, I will advance cutting edge state-of-the-art technologies to protect our nation's digital landscape, and I will have a proven track record of doing this in South Dakota to back me up. I have helped make Dakota State University (DSU) a global leader in cybersecurity education because we recognize the need to address this merging threat. I will take a proactive approach, if given the opportunity, to serve as Secretary.

Now, President-elect Trump has been a tremendous friend to law enforcement over the years, and I will do the same in my role as Secretary. As Governor, I have worked closely with law enforcement to make South Dakota safer. I have overseen hundreds of State troopers in the South Dakota Highway Patrol, and on several occasions, I have convened groups of law enforcement from across our State to address policies that will make our people safer.

In fact, while some in this country were attacking law enforcement and defunding them, we took the opposite approach. In South Dakota, we recruited law enforcement officers to move to South Dakota, a State that respects their service and their sacrifice, and we revamped our law enforcement training to provide the first ever State-led, tribal-focused law enforcement training academy. I am very proud of the work that we have done in cooperation with our tribes to help make their communities more safe.

We must remain vigilant against terrorism and against others who wish to do us harm to our country and to our great people. I will ensure that our intelligence and our law enforcement agencies are working together hand-in-hand, that they are fully equipped to detect, prevent, and respond to threats from radical ideologies and foreign adversaries. This requires resources, coordination, and collaboration across all levels of government. Once again, I will seek your wisdom, and I will seek your input into the months ahead for the sake of the people that we both represent. We have to get this right.

Now, I recognize that homeland security isn't just about prevention, but it's also about resilience. When disasters strike, as we know, they will, the Department of Homeland Security must be ready to respond swiftly, efficiently, and effectively to protect the lives and the property of Americans.

As Governor, I have worked with FEMA in response to a dozen natural disasters in South Dakota. These have included historic floods, tornadoes, blizzards, wildfires, a derecho, and even a global pandemic. As Secretary, I will enhance our emergency preparedness, and strengthen FEMA's capabilities, and we will ensure that no community is left behind, and that lifesaving services like electricity and water are quickly restored.

As Secretary, I will oversee the U.S. Secret Service (USSS), an agency that is in serious need of reforms. We all saw the threats to President-elect Trump last year, and the consequences of failure. Now, that should never happen again. I have worked closely with my own gubernatorial protective detail, and I am familiar with what works and what does not work, and I will bring that experience toward strengthening the Secret Service.

Once again, I am committed to working with this Committee, with Congress, and with the dedicated men and women of the Department of Homeland Security to fulfill our mission. Together, we

can ensure that the United States remains a beacon of freedom, safety, and security for generations to come.

Thank you for the opportunity and the honor to appear before you today. Thank you for the meetings and the time that you took in your office to discuss the Department and what we can do in the future to make the American homeland much more secure. I look forward to your questions, and I hope to earn your trust, and hopefully, also your vote as we embark on this critical work together.

With that, Mr. Chair, I yield back.

Chairman PAUL. Thank you, Governor Noem. We will now proceed to questions. Each Member will have seven minutes. We will have a vote that will start at 10:00 a.m., but we are going to continue the hearing, and keep people in line as you come and go to vote. We will keep the hearing moving. I want to be clear from the outset that we will not tolerate any disruptions. The Capitol Police have been asked to escort anyone immediately from the room if they disrupt the hearing.

This is a standard question, Governor Noem, that we ask of all nominees. Governor Noem, do you agree without reservation to comply with any request or summons to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of Congress, if you are confirmed?

Ms. NOEM. Yes, Mr. Chair.

Chairman PAUL. I am going to reserve the rest of my time for my questions and go to Senator Peters.

Senator PETERS. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Governor Noem, the DHS Secretary has many competing priorities, as you well know, and you outlined certainly in your opening comments; from our borders, to wildfires, to cyberattacks. But as you and I discussed in length, and I appreciate you bringing in up in your opening comments as well, we do have a Northern border in addition to a Southern border.

It's absolutely essential that the DHS has the resources necessary at the Northern border to carry out its mission both between ports of entry and all along the border. In fact, we have seen an increase in unauthorized crossings in recent years at the Northern border.

My question for you is, if confirmed, do you commit to ensuring along with the Southern border, that the Northern border is sufficiently staffed to maintain its security and robust trade between the United States and its neighbors, including at the Gordie Howe International Bridge in my home State of Michigan have the resources they need to facilitate trade while keeping Americans safe?

Ms. NOEM. Yes, Senator Peters. You and I talked about this in your office, and also with Senator Slotkin as well, how important it is to continue to remain focused on our Northern border, and all borders and ports of entry that the United States has.

I think there's been some universal concern from some of the Committee Members that as we focus on the Southern border and what we are seeing as far as the invasion there and the amount of people crossing, that the Northern border would lose focus. But that that will not happen, and we will ensure that our borders are secure and we are addressing all threats that may come in from any direction. Also, with the bridge as well and staffing up on that

as well. I have assured Senator Slotkin as well, that our focus is there to make sure that it is staffed appropriately.

Senator PETERS. Very good. As we discussed, the Department is diligently working to stand up the Northern Border Mission Center at Selfridge Air National Guard Base in Michigan, following the authorization and funding that I was able to secure in the last Congress. This center is critical to supporting the Department's Northern Border Security missions and addressing evolving threats.

Quick question, if confirmed, do you commit to working with me to fully build out the Northern Border Mission Center?

Ms. NOEM. Yes, Senator. We will look forward, and I look forward to working with you to ensure that that is a priority, and that it's adequately resourced, and working with Congress and Senators to make sure that we have what we need to make sure that that mission for that base is fully fulfilled.

Senator PETERS. Great. Thank you. On New Year's, we witnessed two incidents that reminded us that terrorism and extremism remain serious threats to all Americans. Both DHS and the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) have consistently said that the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) most persistent threat to the homeland is from U.S.-based individuals or small groups, radicalized by a variety of ideologies, from white supremacy, to ISIS, to al-Qaeda. We must certainly continue to focus on people who are radicalized here in the United States with the intent of terrorizing our communities.

My question for you, ma'am, is how do you plan to address this threat of U.S.-based terrorist?

Ms. NOEM. Senator, that this is a grave concern for our country, as we all agree that the No. 1 threat to our homeland security is our Southern border. In fact, since Joe Biden has been President, we have seen 382 individuals that have come over that border that are on the terrorist watch list.

Behind me, I have the Governor of Louisiana with me. And he, and his State, and people in this country went through a horrific event on New Year's Day, and one that we never want to see repeated again. But this Governor behind me is concerned also about an upcoming event, which is the Super Bowl coming shortly, which we need to do all that we can to work together, that he has the reassurance that the Federal Government, that the Department of Homeland Security is prepared to help him protect that event and to keep people safe while they are there.

Those 382 individuals are known terrorists that have come over our border. We do not know necessarily where they are because of what has been happening under Joe Biden's policies. Now, President Trump, obviously, won the last election with a clear mandate, and that mandate is for the American people to secure that border. But also, we need to focus on domestic terrorism and homegrown terrorism, which you just referenced in your question.

Homegrown terrorism is on the rise. We see more and more incidents of people that are U.S. citizens that have become radicalized. Knowing when people are leaving the country and coming back, and changes to their behaviors and what their actions are is critically important.

The resources that the Department of Homeland Security has needs to be utilized as far as identifying those threats and being proactive to prevent them, but also protecting civil rights and liberties in that process, and making sure that the Department is on mission to do what it was called to do, why it was created, and what authorities that Congress and the Senate has given them.

My hope is that Governor Landry, and his staff, and his people, and the people that attend the Super Bowl know that the Department of Homeland Security is their partner, is on watch to protect them and to keep that event safe. I hope all Americans know that leadership has consequences. I hope that we can get through and get your support for this nomination, and get confirmed quickly so that we can address the threats that we currently face, and make sure we do not have any repeats of the day that we saw just starting this year on New Year's Day.

Senator PETERS. In the last two years, we have seen increasingly, aggressive and expansive cyberattacks against our Federal agencies. Just last month, Chinese hackers infiltrated the Department of Treasury and stole potentially thousands of unclassified documents. Given these concerning trends by the People's Republic of China (PRC) to hold our Federal networks hostage, do you believe that Federal agencies should be required to implement cybersecurity upgrades, and maintain the highest cybersecurity standards to protect sensitive or classified data and U.S. citizens information as well?

Ms. NOEM. Senator, the mission of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA), the mission of it is to hunt and harden. It's to find those bad actors and help work with local and State infrastructure, critical infrastructure entities so that they can help them be prepared for such cyberattacks, and that they can make sure that they are hardening their systems to protect them in the future, recognizing the vulnerabilities that they.

But this have gotten far off-mission. They are using their resources in ways that was never intended. The misinformation, and disinformation that they have stuck their toe into and meddled with should be refocused back onto what their job is; and that is to support critical infrastructure, and to help our local and small businesses and critical infrastructure at the State level to have the resources and be prepared for those cyberattacks that they will face.

Salt Typhoon was a campaign of espionage by the PRC in China against our telecoms, where large amount of data was stolen and taken, and people's private information was taken as well. We have also seen China and the PRC go after our critical infrastructure with the Volt Typhoon hack. That was extremely dangerous because there was no reason for them to do that, just to steal people's data and information. The reason for them to go after that was to control our critical infrastructure for the ability to see if they could shut down a water plant, a utility company, and that was to cripple our country.

These threats are real. CISA needs to be much more effective, smaller, more nimble to really fulfill their mission, which is to hunt and to help harden our nation's critical infrastructure.

Senator PETERS. Thank you.

Chairman PAUL. Thank you. Senator Scott.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR SCOTT

Senator SCOTT. Governor Noem, congratulations on your nomination.

Ms. NOEM. Thank you.

Senator SCOTT. I think you are going to do a great job.

Ms. NOEM. Thank you.

Senator SCOTT. I think it's great that you are a Governor and you bring that expertise to the table. I just went through the campaign to get reelected and it was after the Butler shooting. I had asked people, I said it in all my events, "Raise your hand if you think the acting director of the Secret Service is going to tell us what happened." Not one person. I said, "What about Secretary Mayorkas? You know, he's running Homeland Security. What do you think?" I said, "How about Christopher Wray, head of the FBI?" Not one person.

Can you just talk about in the importance of transparency and accountability in government, and how you are going to bring that to the table?

Ms. NOEM. Yes. Senator Scott, thank you for that question, because that's what I have found across the country as well, and I know it's certainly true in my home State of South Dakota. Is that people do not trust the Federal Government. They do not trust our leadership and this current administration that's in the White House right now to tell them the truth. To tell them the truth about what the threats really are about our agencies and departments when there are failures, addressing them and fixing it.

The Secret Service, is one of those perfect examples. They need leadership that understands why that Secret Service was created and what it needs to do. There's two elements really that the Secret Service is tasked with, and that is protective detail, and then also investigations. Yet we see investigators within the Secret Service out there investigating antiquities and other things that are off-mission when they should be focused on making sure we are addressing national security events with the protocols that are necessary, and protecting the individuals that they are charged with, and getting that skill set and training that are necessary that's been compromised by not having enough people there, and being adequately staffed and resourced.

But frankly, the leadership has not been honest about talking about it. We saw this with the drones over New Jersey as well, the Federal Government not answering the questions from the public. When they finally got a straight answer out of President Trump, they felt reassured that somebody recognized that this was something they were questioning and that they deserved answers.

My goal and my mission is to build trust. We will undertake a large job and a large duty that we have to fulfill, that the American people expect us to do by securing our border to make sure that our nation is a nation with borders, or we are no nation at all. That we are making sure that those criminal actors that are perpetuating violence in our communities, and in our cities, and towns and States are removed from this country, that there's consequences for breaking the law in our country.

Again, there has to be consequence, because when Americans break the law, there's consequences. Why would we ever allow someone to come in from another country, and not have consequences? Or allow them to continue to go forward and to commit rape, and murders, and break other laws that endanger our society?

We have had over 13,000 murderers that are loose in this country that have come over that border. We have had almost 16,000 rapists and sexual assault perpetuators that are loose in this country right now. 425,000-plus people have criminal convictions that are here illegally in this country that our current administration's doing nothing to round them up and get them out of our country.

We will be doing that immediately, and that will be the priority. That is one of the reasons that, today, the American people have lost their trust. President Trump will build it back, and know that their Federal Government is accountable to them, and is working to put America first, again.

Senator SCOTT. Joe Biden completely opened our Southern border and dismantled our entire immigration system. As a former Governor, I know that when the Federal Government policies are broken and failing Americans, you see the impacts in your State, just like I did when I was a Governor. You take the steps necessary to protect the families in your State. I know you have done that.

One thing you did is, you talked about before, you sent troops, our National Guard to the Southern border. Can you talk more about how Biden's open border policy has affected your State and communities, and the role your State resources placed in helping secure the border?

Ms. NOEM. We certainly have seen the effects in South Dakota that many of your States did. I would say every State has seen the effects of an open border and the policies that have been under the Biden Administration. We saw increased crime, but we also saw increased drug activity. We saw cartels and their affiliates moving into our State to proliferate trafficking, and we saw people being victimized and a lack of accountability with the Federal Government.

When Texas was addressing the situation and asked other Governors for help, we sent help. I know many of the other Governors at the time were sending law enforcement. But I made the decision that, at that time, it was more appropriate to send the National Guard. That our National Guard could be activated under Title 32 and sent to assist another State from the invasion that was happening.

Because the National Guard is trained for just such a mission, because of this invasion that it is a war zone down there with what they are going to see, the threats that they would see, and that they are trained specifically to interact with other agencies. The National Guard is used to falling in with other agencies and cooperating with them, and could do that seamlessly. Their families and their communities are normalized to them being deployed.

We have in South Dakota, deployed our National Guard to the Southern border eight different times. Two of them were Federal deployments that the Biden Administration sent them down there. One was to send our Lakota helicopters, which were used for sur-

veillance in the drug interdiction that was going on down there. But six other times, I sent them under State activation to partner with Texas and other States in securing our Southern border.

They did security operations, they also did building of the wall, and partnered with Texas recognizing the failures of the Federal Government. The failures of the Federal Government are significant. We have seen our families and communities devastated by those effects; by the drug epidemic, by the trafficking that's going on, the increased crime.

We recognized that just because the Federal Government was not doing their job, we could not fail our State, and I needed to protect the people of South Dakota. The people of South Dakota were overwhelmingly supportive of these deployments and very proud of our National Guard.

Senator SCOTT. When I was Governor of Florida, there was a terrorist hack in Paris by Syrian refugees. President Obama was President, and I said I would like to know if you are going to send refugees to my State, that you give us some background on them. I assume you vetted them and tell us what's going on. You have to tell me, but you ought to tell our State law enforcement and our local law enforcement. That they said, go jump in the lake. They had meaner than that, but they said, you have no rights as a Governor, which had made no sense.

We had over 70,000 people come here after Afghanistan on planes into this country, completely unvetted. Right? They have never given our Governors any information. Would you change that?

Ms. NOEM. Yes. The communication between States and the Federal Government has been absolutely broken. That's what I love about this Committee. Is you do have Governors sitting on this Committee that have been in that role as a commander-in-chief, and have the responsibility for being the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of their State.

It's a different perspective than serving. I served in Congress, too, and both are extremely important and they are just different in that responsibility that weighs on your shoulder. I often told folks that that is the thing that, that most times, if something was going to keep me up at night, it was the responsibility that I had being commander-in-chief, recognizing the decisions that I made. I am sure you had this feeling as well, Senator Scott, as Governor, that impacted those families, those soldiers and it impacted their communities when we pulled them out and the importance of that.

When they were bringing refugees into the country, I as well communicated that to the Federal Government. They were bringing refugees, and I asked how they were vetted, how we were working with their home countries to find out who they really were, what their intentions were, and why they were coming to the United States and we received no information from this administration. That the vetting process was being done, that we knew where they were going. In fact, they kept us in the dark and did not communicate to us even what States and where those refugees were being placed.

That is something that we need to change when we have programs that fall under the purview of the Department of Homeland

Security. There needs to be communication, especially with the Governor, so that we can coordinate to ensure that it's the right thing for that State.

Senator SCOTT. Thank you.

Chairman PAUL. Senator Hassan.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR HASSAN

Senator HASSAN. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Welcome Governor Noem. Really appreciate you being here. Welcome to your family as well.

Ms. NOEM. Thank you.

Senator HASSAN. Families do share in this kind of public service, and we appreciate them very much.

As we discussed at our meeting last month, as a former Governor, I appreciate the important responsibilities that Governors have to ensure the safety and security of their communities, including by managing public safety and emergency agencies.

I will say that, in many ways, I agree with some of the things that Senator Scott just said about improving communication between the Department of Homeland Security and Governors around who is being sent to States. It's a critical issue, and something that I was frustrated by when I was Governor. I look forward to hearing more today about your priorities, if confirmed, about how your experience as Governor would help you run the Department of Homeland Security.

Let me just start by following-up with a question that Senator Peters had also touched on. We have recently in New Hampshire seen a dramatic increase in unauthorized border crossings at the Northern border. When I was at the Northern border recently, law enforcement told me about the need for more personnel and resources. We still don't have cell phone coverage in a lot of the stretch of our Northern border. I have worked with Senator Cramer on bipartisan legislation to strengthen our Northern border strategy because it's clear more support is needed.

Governor, if you are confirmed, would you deploy additional full-time personnel and upgrade equipment along the Northern border?

Ms. NOEM. Senator, I enjoyed our meeting that we had, and you identifying the Northern border issues that are going on, the lack of security and the lack of technologies that you really need to cover some of the landscapes that are there. Very different than the Southern border. Some just as equally challenging, but all need to be addressed.

I definitely will be working with you to ensure that our Northern border is adequately resourced as well. We do have to have the resources in order to be successful. That's something I want to work with Congress, with the Senate and the House on to ensure that the resources are there to meet the challenges that we have.

We have not fully utilized the technologies that are available that are necessary to really secure this country and to compete with those bad actors which wish to infiltrate our country. Having the ability to utilize them will make it make us much more safe. I will work with you, most definitely, in ensuring the Northern border is protected.

Senator HASSAN. I appreciate that. I just note, too, that at the same time, there's real concern in New Hampshire and all along the Northern border that we strengthen the border and have the resources we need. We also have a really strong economic relationship with our partner, our friends to the north, and a lot of family relationships. I think it's important that we are smart in the deployment of technology. We don't want to impede that flow of economy and people that's lawful, but we do want to make sure that we have the resources we need.

I want to turn to the Southern border now at the Southern border. We need significant technological investments to support law enforcement personnel in their efforts to catch fentanyl smugglers, to stop human traffickers, and seize the cash and illegal guns that criminals traffic southward to the cartels. We talked about this a little bit.

There's bipartisan support for these investments, and I have worked with colleagues, including Senators Lankford and Cornyn on legislation around these issues. Governor Noem, could you identify specific technological investments that you would make at the Southern border, and are you willing to work with me on increasing southbound inspections if you are confirmed?

Ms. NOEM. Yes, certainly, Senator. You have heard President Trump talk about the need to build a wall. The wall and infrastructure is critically important, but also at our 382 legal ports of entry. We need to have technology so that flow can happen north and south, and it can happen in a legal manner to ensure that our commerce can continue to operate, and that we can continue to make sure that we are also secure.

I think *de minimis* shipments are a concern, and the need to look at those and how traffickers and fentanyl distributors are using that. I think we also need to use scanners surveillance operations. There's new technologies out there to cooperate with satellites in some area where the topography does not necessarily facilitate having actual infrastructure.

Also the ability to make sure that we are utilizing that technology that allows us to know what is going south that might be fueling some of the violence that ends up coming back north, and ensuring that we are stopping that before it has the chance to supply those cartel and bad actors that would come in.

Senator HASSAN. Yes. I really appreciate that because the southbound flow, particularly of cash and weapons, fuels the cartels and strengthens them and it's something that we really have to focus on. I also want to follow-up on the issue of cybersecurity. Recently, criminals launched a successful cyberattack on PowerSchool, a cloud-based record management system that contains personal information about tens of millions of kindergartners through high school seniors, including many students and teachers in New Hampshire.

This cyberattack on PowerSchool comes as schools and local governments across the country have seen a surge in cyberattacks on their systems. When a small school of maybe 1,000 students or so has to pay $2 million in ransom, I want you to think about what that does to one of our small communities.

Governor Noem, if you are confirmed, how will you empower the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency to improve the cybersecurity of State and local governments in the United States?

Ms. NOEM. Absolutely. Thank you, Senator. If I am confirmed and have the opportunity to service as Secretary of this Department, I will be following the Constitution and the rule of law, and then getting these departments back on mission to why they were created and why they are existing.

What CISA should be doing is helping those small entities, those schools, those local city governments, the State governments, and the small businesses that are critical infrastructure that do not have the resources to stay on top of the critical protections that they need to enact.

Senator HASSAN. Let me follow-up just quickly on that one point. It's something we discussed when we had our meeting. I worked with Senator Cornyn on a bipartisan bill. It became law that created a cybersecurity grant program for State and local governments. This is an addition to each State getting a cyber coordinator to help on the ground. We discussed this program, and I know you as Governor had some reservations about the structure of the program.

But if confirmed, will you commit to working with Congress to adjust it? I would love your input about what gave you pause as Governor. I think there were only two Governors who did not participate in the program. I hope that as we work on the concerns you have, you would work with me to adjust and reauthorize the program.

Ms. NOEM. Yes. All grants within the Department will be evaluated when I come in and be looked at to see what we can do to make sure that they are actually fulfilling the mission to which they were established.

What I would say about the cybersecurity grants, in South Dakota when I came in as Governor, one of my main priorities was to bring the next industry into the State. I determined that that would be technology and cybersecurity. In fact, we have Dakota State University in our State, which is a cybersecurity national leader in training those cyber warriors that we need to protect us and keep us safe. I have since then partnered to grow and double the size of that school. We train a lot of National Security Agency (NSA) employees in South Dakota.

And so, understanding cybersecurity and my experience in that, I think, is critically important to the Department and bringing it to the table to do this. You talked about why we did not take that cybersecurity grant in South Dakota, and it's because the requirements of that grant would have caused me to grow my State government. The administration costs of it would have been much more than what had been able to facilitate at the local level. Our State was already proactively helping these individuals that needed the resources to secure their systems.

Senator HASSAN. I appreciate that. I am way over time. There were very few requirements purposely in that grant program, other than to make sure the money was being spent the way we authorized. But let's continue to talk about that. Thank you.

Ms. NOEM. Thank you.

Chairman PAUL. Senator Hawley.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR HAWLEY

Senator HAWLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Governor Noem, welcome. Congratulations on your nomination. I am delighted to see you here. I do notice the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee is over your shoulder there. I would have to question your judgment about who your friends are based on that. The great chairman from the State of Missouri. It's fantastic to have you here.

The Department of Homeland Security is not particularly old, but you already have what I hope will soon be the distinction of succeeding the worst secretary in the history of the Department of Homeland Security. Alejandro Mayorkas has been an absolute disgrace to that department, and frankly to this country, and I am delighted to see you willing to step up and serve.

Let me just ask you something. I repeatedly asked your predecessor when he sat where you are sitting, whether the Southern border was secure. He repeatedly told me under oath, "It is secure, Senator." He repeatedly said under oath, "Our policies are working, Senator," meaning the Biden Administration policies that, of course, gave us this devastating open border. Let me just ask you, is the Southern border secure as we find it today?

Ms. NOEM. Senator, no. The Southern border is not secure today. But in just three days, we will have a new President in this country, President Donald J. Trump, and he will secure our border.

Senator HAWLEY. That is refreshing candor. I am glad to hear it. Let me ask you about a young man from my State. This is Travis Wolfe,[1] who's 12 years old when he was killed just over a year ago by an illegal migrant who mowed him down—and I choose my words carefully—mowed him down in a motor vehicle, hit him head on doing 75 on a 40, and killed him. Others were severely injured.

Just yesterday, a witness sitting where you are sitting today told this Committee that migrant crime is, "Not an actual concern," not an actual concern, in a hearing before this Committee advising us to drop the Laken Riley Act and not focus on migrant crime.

In my State, with the death of people like Travis Wolfe and Officer David Lee, who was assaulted and killed in St. Louis, and officers in Kansas City who have been assaulted by illegal migrants, and others who have been carjacked and stabbed, would you agree with me that migrant crime sure as heck is an actual concern and that you intend to do something about it?

Ms. NOEM. Yes, Senator, absolutely. I am so sorry about Travis, my prayers go out to his family. I can't even imagine what that is like. Thank you for telling his story, because there's so many families in this country that have that same story. They do not understand why the Federal Government is allowing people to come into this country illegally and then perpetuate crimes against their people, and then give them resources, and shelter, and food, and debit cards to go take care of their families when they go to work every single day to make sure that they are providing for their families and are held accountable to when they break our laws.

[1] The picture of Travis Wolfe appears in the Appendix on page 208.

Senator HAWLEY. Let me ask you this. Will you work with President Trump to reinstate the Remain in Mexico program that the President had in place in his first term, which does so much to ensure that those who would seek to abuse our asylum system are not allowed into the country. Those who have legitimate asylum claims, their claims are processed in due order and in due course, but they wait in Mexico until those claims are fully processed. Will you work to reinstate that program?

Ms. NOEM. Yes, Senator. The President and I have talked extensively about this, and will 100 percent partner with him to reinstate the Remain in Mexico policy and make sure that it's in place.

Senator HAWLEY. Fantastic. I think Travis might be alive today if that policy had been in place. Let me ask you about CBP One. The phone app that I have called concierge service for illegal immigrants. I am sure you are familiar with it. This was the Biden Administration's effort to allow asylum seekers to apply ahead of time using their phones, but not actually to provide any evidence that they needed asylum.

There was a newspaper report, a press report, that said the only problem with the app is it never asks users are you seeking asylum? They do not ask for any asylum evidence. They simply release these so-called asylum seekers who use the app into the country on parole. Sometimes they are never given a hearing.

The Inspector General (IG) actually did a report, a full investigation report on CBP One, and found that frequently, users of this app were claiming the same addresses in the United States as their intended destination even though they did not know each other, they were not family connections. In other words, it has been completely abused. The idea that the Federal Government would pay for this kind of concierge service for illegals, I think, is outrageous. Will you end the use of the CBP One app?

Ms. NOEM. Yes, Senator. If confirmed, and I have the opportunity to be Secretary, on day one, CBP One will be shut down. There's data and information in there that we will preserve so that we can ensure we know who's coming into this country and who's already here that we need to go find. But also, we make sure that there's another program, Cuba-Haiti-Nicaragua-Venezuela (CHNV), which I am sure you are very familiar with, where our Federal Government actually paid to fly people into this country directly from other countries without any vetting or knowing who they are.

There's several of these programs that need to be eliminated, and we need to ensure that we are following legal immigration laws.

Senator HAWLEY. I am glad you just mentioned CHNV. This is a mass parole program. Of course, as you know, our law allows parole in only very limited circumstances. There are two circumstances, and it requires case-by-case evaluation. The present administration, soon to be gone, has granted mass parole and in direct defiance of the law, not case-by-case evaluation. The CHNV program is one of those instances. Will you put a stop to this abuse of our parole law in our asylum system?

Ms. NOEM. Yes. We will go back to case-by-case evaluation of these parole cases and ensure that we have more resources, if you will partner with us, to make sure that our legal immigration system is fully utilized, that we have more judges, more immigration

courts, so that we can process people legally and make sure that they are going through that process rather than the—well, like Joe Biden has done, use this as an excuse to allow people to come into our country with no consequences.

Senator HAWLEY. Let me ask you about another lowlight. Not a highlight, but a lowlight of this last administration and DHS, your predecessor. The current Secretary of DHS established a disinformation board using taxpayer resources to police speech on the internet and elsewhere to tag American citizens' viewpoints as either legitimate or not legitimate, and use the power of the State to censor them, including having them removed and perhaps penalized.

This has to be the darkest chapter, I think, in DHS's short history. He eventually withdrew the board under intense criticism, but has never fully repudiated it and never promised not to do it again. Will you pledge to us, here today, that under your leadership, there will never be a disinformation board or anything like it at DHS, and you will be a champion for the free speech and First Amendment rights of all Americans?

Ms. NOEM. Senator, there will not be a board such as that under my leadership at the Department of Homeland Security. Absolutely.

Senator HAWLEY. Fantastic. Let me ask you in my remaining seconds just one more thing about the Secret Service. You have mentioned this, and I am so glad that you did. This Committee, and it has been bipartisan, this Committee has done bipartisan work on the attempted assassinations or the assassination attempts, I should perhaps say, of the former President, soon to be the President, President Trump.

We were stymied at every turn, and I should use the present tense. We are currently being stymied at every turn by the current Secret Service leadership, and frankly, by the leadership of DHS who have refused to turn over documents, who refuse to make people available for interviews.

We finally had to pass my own law in this Committee, which we unanimously adopted as law, a statute mind you, which would require DHS and Secret Service to turn over relevant information to us about the assassination attempts. It's unbelievable.

When you come to this office, I hope very soon, will you pledge to us that you will open the books on all of the facts associated and around these assassination attempts? That you will make available to us and to the public, most importantly, all the facts, so that we can ensure that this never happens again, and that the needed reforms in the Secret Service are put into effect?

Ms. NOEM. Yes. Senator, if I am the Secretary of Homeland Security, I will certainly work with you to build transparency and make sure the facts are shared with you and your Committee.

I know that you have been very frustrated by the lack of transparency from the Department, and I want to thank those of you that have worked on that report that was put together on these assassination attempts. I know it was a bipartisan report and investigation that this Committee conducted, and I appreciate you focusing on that. I will work with you to get the information so that you

have the truth of really what happened there and the failures so they can be fixed.

Senator HAWLEY. Thank you. That's a great place to end, and a high note as I see my friend, Senator Blumenthal, who did fantastic work on this effort. It will be an incredible new day, and incredibly refreshing to have a DHS Secretary who will tell us the truth, who will be honest with us about the facts, honest with the American people, and who will enforce our law. I know you will do that, Governor Noem. I look forward to supporting your nomination. Congratulations.

Ms. NOEM. Thank you.

Senator JOHNSON [presiding.] Senator Blumenthal.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR BLUMENTHAL

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Senator Johnson. Welcome, Governor Noem, and thank you for being here. Thank you for visiting with me, and thank you to your family for their service as well.

Let me begin on a high note, thanking Senator Hawley for his leadership on the effort that I led with him to essentially get some basic facts out of the Secret Service when we were investigating, Senator Johnson and I, as leaders of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigation (PSI), helping to lead it with the Chair and Ranking Member here. I am hoping that you have read our report and that you will agree to begin implementing its recommendations, which call for major reforms. In my view, a house-cleaning, top to bottom, in the Secret Service and greater transparency with this Committee and with the American public.

Ms. NOEM. Yes, sir. I will certainly work with you to do that and to work to make sure that we have that transparency, and the Committee has the information that it needs to do due diligence of its oversight.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Our investigation is continuing. Senator Johnson and I have discussed it, and we will be making more requests to pursue the fact finding that is so important.

I want to ask you about disaster relief. California's on fire. The fires raging, they are going to leave destruction and devastation. That is heartbreaking. I am really disappointed with some of the statements that President-elect Trump has made. For example, saying that, "We won't give him—" referring to Governor Newsom, "money to put out all his fires. If we do not give him money to put out fires, he's got a problem."

The specter is there of potential discrimination based on politics, withholding money from California or other States. It's not an unfounded fear. In the last administration, there were public reports about President Trump withholding money from the State of Washington because of his disagreements with Governor Inslee.

Connecticut, like the rest of the Nation, suffers from these natural disasters. Most recently, in August, we were hit by major flooding, and these natural disasters are going to become more frequent, as will be the need for the Federal Government to meet the requests for declarations of natural disaster.

I assume you will agree with me that withholding disaster relief by President Trump or any other Chief Executive of the United States is a violation of his duty and of law?

Ms. NOEM. Senator, leadership has consequences, and looking at the tragedy that's happening in California——

Senator BLUMENTHAL. I want to ask you yes or no with all due respect. It's an easy——

Ms. NOEM. What's happening in California is the ramification of many decisions over many years. But under my leadership at the Department of Homeland Security, there will be no political bias to how disaster relief is delivered to the American people.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. If President Trump were to say to you, we are going to withhold money from Connecticut or Michigan, or any of the States, Iowa, because we do not like the Governor, or we do not like the politics of the State, you would stand up to him and say, "Mr. President, we need to allocate that money."

Ms. NOEM. Senator, in three days, President Trump will take an oath to uphold the Constitution and the rule of law in this country. He will do that, and I will be glad to have him back.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. I assume that's a yes?

Ms. NOEM. I do not speak to hypotheticals, which is what you are asking me to do. But what I will tell you is that as Secretary, I will do the same. I will deliver the programs as the laws dictate——

Senator BLUMENTHAL. It's more than a hypothetical, with all due respect. I apologize for interrupting you, but my time is limited, as you know, as a veteran of these hearings. It's more than a hypothetical. It's based on experience with President Trump withholding money from Washington State and elsewhere.

I need to know from you, will you stand up to the President and say, no, the Constitution and the Impoundment Act requires us, for example, to allocate the $100 billion dollars that we have just appropriated in the last session to States like Connecticut, $3 million, Texas, $10 million, almost every one of the States represented here. Will you say no to the President if he withholds that money?

Ms. NOEM. Sir, I do not know about the scenarios that you're referencing with President Trump, but what I will tell you is that if given the chance to be Secretary of Homeland Security, that I will deliver the programs according to the law, and that it will be done with no political bias. If the programs change, or if you decide to change the rule of law, then I will follow that while adhering to the Constitution.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. So, you pledge to allocate and distribute that $100 billion?

Ms. NOEM. According to how the program is written with no political bias.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you.

Ms. NOEM. Every American deserves to be there and have disaster relief the same as their neighbors.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Basically, following the law?

Ms. NOEM. Yes.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Let me ask you. Senator Peters asked you about homegrown terrorists. The New Orleans tragedy, was the result of a homegrown terrorist born in this country, radicalized by

ISIS. It reflects the reason why the intelligence community (IC), the FBI, almost all of our law enforcement has said repeatedly; domestic violent extremism is the most lethal and persistent threat to our security.

That terrorist was radicalized by ISIS. The investigation is underway. We do not know all the facts, but we do know that he was a military veteran, and ISIS was responsible for radicalizing him. Shouldn't we focus on ISIS as a threat to this country's security?

Ms. NOEM. Senator, certainly, we should be focused on all threats to this nation's security. That's the mission of the Department of Homeland Security. Homegrown terrorism is growing. We have more and more incidences. The tragedy we saw and the terrorist attack in New Orleans——

Senator BLUMENTHAL. What will you do to combat it? What will you do to stop ISIS and other extremist organizations from radicalizing people in this country?

Ms. NOEM. Certainly, Senator, I will continue to work with the administration, and our partners, and the Department of Defense (DOD), the intelligence agencies also within Secretary of State, and the other branches, and cabinet officials to make sure we are bringing all resources to bear to identify and to stop these types of terrorist activities.

What I would say is the cybersecurity and intelligence elements that we have within the Department of Homeland Security have been incredibly siloed. They have not communicated with other intelligence agencies like they should and partnered. The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) has some interaction, but not enough. We also need to have CISA have interaction with the FBI, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to make sure they are working together to stop these types of threats, and identify when they are growing among our citizens and how they become radicalized.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. My time is expired. This area of questioning, I think, is supremely important. I know there's a lot of focus on the border. We all want more border security. We want to stop migrant crime, but let's not take our eye off the ball. The Governor of Louisiana for the Super Bowl ought to be really riveted on the potential for homegrown terrorism as a threat. I hope that you will help him and other Governors to do their duty to protect the people of the United States from that homegrown terrorist threat. Thank you.

Ms. NOEM. Yes. I look forward to working with them.

Chairman PAUL. Senator Ernst.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR ERNST

Senator ERNST. Thank you, Senator Johnson.

Governor Noem, thank you so much for being here today, and I want to thank you for your continuing service. The service that you had as a Member of Congress the service that you have displayed as a Governor of the great State of South Dakota, our neighbor to the Northwest, and for being willing to step up and take on this immense responsibility. Thank you so very much.

We had such a good discussion when you came to my office in the last several weeks. We talked about the importance of securing our border and fixing our broken immigration system. I would like

to start today by sharing a story about one of my constituents from Council Bluffs, Iowa. What we have seen through this broken border is tragedy that strikes so many families across the United States.

Very similar to the story that was shared by my colleague from Missouri with his constituent, Mr. Wolfe. I have a young woman by the name of Sarah Root, who encountered tragedy on January 31st, 9 years ago.[1] Sarah Root was struck and killed by an illegal immigrant who was drunk driving. He was driving at three times the legal limit of alcohol. Sarah's killer was bonded out, bonded out before the Roots laid her to rest. He fled the country and has not been seen or heard from since. The Root family has not seen justice.

Governor, how do you plan to prioritize the detention and deportation of illegal immigrants like Sarah's killer?

Ms. NOEM. Senator, thank you for telling Sarah's story. I remember when this happened because it was so close to home and so devastating for her and her family and the entire State of Iowa, and our country.

President Trump is focused on making sure that these types of situations do not happen again. That we do not continue to lose our children and our family members to illegal immigrants that come in and perpetuate crime with no accountability, and then are released with no consequences.

The No. 1 priority of the President is to secure the border, and to deport these criminal actors immediately as soon as possible. They will be the No. 1 priority to make our communities safer, and so that we don't have this kind of situation going forward. In fact, people, I think when they first heard my name being mentioned and nominated for the Department of Homeland Security, maybe thought it was a little bit of a surprise. Like, "Oh, I didn't think about Kristi doing that job."

But I tell people the reason that I asked for it is because I knew it was the President's No. 1 priority. I knew that it needed to have someone in the position that would do what the President promised the American people, would be strong enough to do it and follow through to make sure that we are protecting our communities and America.

But that also came at it from a perspective of how these families feel, that was a wife, and a mom, and a grandmother, and would be able to stand up and communicate to the American people what we were doing and why we were, because it's what they asked us to do.

I have three grandchildren and one more on the way. When I look at little Miss Addie every day, I just think what kind of a country is she going to grow up in? What kind of a country will we leave her, and her brother, and a sister? I do not want them to think that their grandma sat on the sidelines and did not do all that she could.

So, I will enforce the constitution and the law, and I will make sure that when people enact horrific things like this or that happen to Sarah and her family, that there will be consequences for it.

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[1] The picture of Sarah Root appears in the Appendix on page 207.

Senator ERNST. Yes, absolutely. As a fellow grandma, I know that you are perfectly positioned to enforce this.

I do want to move on to another topic that we visited about in my office. I am the founder and the chair of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) Senate Caucus. We do need greater government efficiency, and I do believe in order to do that, we need less of our employees teleworking and more of those government workers back in the office working for our constituents.

To that end, it ties together then, too. We just found out that the Treasury Department had a cyberattack on December 8th from China. No surprise here, they accessed servers through work-from-home software. It all ties together. We need more people back in the offices, making sure that any communications are secured, any work is secured.

And to that, I know the Biden Administration has put a huge emphasis on the cyber bureaucracy, but they have not really done anything about it, and they have not given any authority to those that are enforcing the standards. We need to enforce the standards that are set forth to make sure the cybersecurity is truly there.

But what can DHS do? One with telework, how do we get the employees back? Then, two, how do we make sure that our systems are secure from these cyberattacks?

Ms. NOEM. Senator, thank you for focusing on remote work and the need to get people back in their offices and accountable to the work that they do. In fact, I have heard since being nominated for this position that many of the agencies within the Department are not showing up. They are not doing their jobs.

But even FEMA, who is responsible for disaster response, that they have the alternative of some of these employees to not even respond to a disaster which might explain the horrific results that we saw in North Carolina when they had such a terrible disaster that impacted families and communities. FEMA failed them so miserably. If it's not even a responsibility of them to show up when terrible things happen, what other day-to-day activities are not getting done because they are working for home or not doing their job at all.

You talked about cybersecurity and the need to ensure that our systems are safe and secure. One of the things that disturbs me the most is that we do not necessarily even know how some of these espionage attacks that have infiltrated our systems have happened. We do not know how to stop them yet. We do not have the knowledge, and that our departments and intelligence agencies, and cybersecurity agencies have become siloed and are not working together to stay in front of these bad actors.

But many times, our most vulnerable area happens at the State and local level. Some of these smaller entities that feeds information into our systems is where they choose to infiltrate, and get our data, and to really hold for ransom many of these companies, and then impact our Federal systems as well.

One of the first meetings I had when I was elected Governor with a former Governor during the transition was he said the No. 1 priority you are going to have as Governor is to secure our systems.

Senator ERNST. Yes.

Ms. NOEM. He said our systems are so antiquated and we have had over 16,000 hacking attempts in just the last month. You need to secure our systems and get it done. That was a priority for me and to do that. We fully funded it and got it done in South Dakota, and it's being implemented today. I look forward to doing that at the Federal level to make sure that people's data and information is safe, but also our country is safe from these bad actors that have a plan to take us out.

Senator ERNST. Thank you. My time has expired. But I do want to end on a note that another thing that I do truly appreciate about you and your nomination is that as a Governor, you have worked with those local constituencies as well and those local governments. I know that this will be an incredible strength that will ensure continued success for you within the Department. Thank you, Governor, very much. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman PAUL [presiding.] Senator Kim.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR KIM

Senator KIM. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Governor, it's good to see you.

Ms. NOEM. Good to see you.

Senator KIM. Thanks for coming before our Committee. I wanted to just ask you, not just about your work, but how it's going to fit into the broader incoming Trump Administration. Particular, I guess I am uncertain about roles and responsibilities regarding your position and Tom Homan's. I guess I just want to ask you just point blank, like who's going to be in charge of the border?

Ms. NOEM. The President will be in charge of the border. It's a national security issue. The President is in charge of this country and has made a promise to the American people, and we will fulfill his agenda.

Senator KIM. That was a good answer to the answer I would have given as well, but I guess I got confused when Trump made the announcement about Tom Homan. He said quote I am pleased to announce that Tom Homan had said that he's in charge of our nation's borders.

I guess, again, I would just like to go back to you. How are you going to work with Mr. Homan? What is the division there? I am trying to get a better sense of who's in charge.

Ms. NOEM. Yes. Tom Homan is an incredible human being who has over 30 years of experience——

Senator KIM. Incredible experience, I get that.

Ms. NOEM [continuing]. At the border, and the insight and wisdom he——

Senator KIM. I am just trying to think through the decision-making process. When it comes to your work, for instance, will he be giving orders directly to CBP, ICE, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)?

Ms. NOEM. Tom Homan has a direct line to the President. He is an advisor to the President, the Border Czar. I obviously will be, if nominated and confirmed, and put into the position of being the Department of Homeland Security Secretary and responsible for the authorities that we have in the actions that we take.

Senator KIM. I say this because I actually want to make sure that we are empowering the next Secretary of Homeland Security.

Ms. NOEM. Yes.

Senator KIM. In the legislation that was codified by Congress and moved forward that started this after September 11, 2001 (9/11) said, "All functions of all offices, employees and organizational units of the Department are vested in the Secretary."

I guess, the reason why I mentioned this is I have just seen some quotes from Mr. Homan where he said, "I will be making decisions on border security and deportation." He was asked in another interview about the stronger role that he will play, and he said, "Absolutely, I will be making decisions on how we do the border."

I just raised that as a concern of mine because not only is that about the function of our Executive Branch, but also the capabilities of this Committee to be able to properly do our constitutional duties for oversight. The ability for us to be able to have that conversation. We can talk to you, engage with you, that is the direct way. But if he is going to be making decisions, then he should come before this Committee as well. I know that that's something where, as far as I know, his role will be directly at the White House. It's not something that will be under the purview directly of this Committee. I just wanted to raise those concerns.

Ms. NOEM. Yes. Tom and I work very well together, and talk and communicate all the time, and we will be working together on a daily basis when we are in our positions under the new administration. I would say there's no authorities being planned to be taken away from the Department or myself, if I am in the role.

Senator KIM. But it sends some mixed signals that you can understand how people in my home State, maybe around the country, when they hear Mr. Homan saying, I am making the decisions when they hear President-elect Trump say he's in charge of our border. So, I urge that we are going to try to do our best to try to make sure we are empowering the Department, empowering the next Secretary, because that's where our laws are invested in our decisionmaking.

Ms. NOEM. Yes. Thank you, Senator. We will make sure you have all the information that you need, and Tom working directly with the President, and I working directly with the President, hope to help you get all that you need to be reassured that the authorities will stay the same as they currently are, but we will continue to work to secure that border and make sure that we are working together in that way.

Senator KIM. I want to switch gears about, you raised the concerns about terrorism, especially foreign terrorist groups. I guess I just wanted to ask you, what are the major foreign terrorist groups that are out there that we are tracking, which are the ones that are concerns to us in terms of potentially trying to inspire or coordinate an attack upon us? If you can just give me a sense of what their current capabilities are to try to enact that.

Ms. NOEM. I think we face a lot of threats, Senator, and since I am not in the role today, I should not get into specifics with you.

Senator KIM. Can you at least get specific about what organizations that are out there.

Ms. NOEM. Yes.

Senator KIM. I just wanted to get a sense of your knowledge of the organizations.

Ms. NOEM. All the traditional terrorist organizations that have always threatened the United States——

Senator KIM. Such as?

Ms. NOEM [continuing]. I would say Hamas, ISIS, continuing down that path of those terrorist organizations. But we will continue to also focus, not just on those, but the cartels, their partnership with the Chinese and what they are doing.

For over 30 years, I have worked on national policy, on food policy, on agriculture policy, and I have seen the Chinese agenda to infiltrate our country, control our food supply chain, but also their manipulation of their currency, and stealing our internet protocol (IP). I believe that this fentanyl crisis that they have flooded our country with is geared, and the purpose of it is to kill our next generation of Americans——

Senator KIM. No, I do not discount the importance of those.

Ms. NOEM [continuing]. It is to control us.

When you focus on one or two groups, I think it takes your eye off the ball as to where all the threats could come from. We just spent a significant amount of time talking about homegrown terrorism as well, and about——

Senator KIM. Correct. I am glad we are having that conversation. But the reason why I mentioned it, I was not trying to quiz you or anything of that nature, it's just that when the Department of Homeland Security, when their threat assessment for 2025 lists three organizations; lists Al-Qaeda, lists ISIS, in particular, ISIS–Khorasan, and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and the threat from Iran.

We all understand that we want to work with the incoming administration to try to have an orderly process. One with that. But I just want to make sure that, in particular, with DHS, the primary mission if we look at the founding legislation, the primary mission, the very first mission is prevent terrorist attacks within the United States and do everything we can to minimize that type of threat.

Yes, I do think it's important for us to focus in on one, two, or three, or just wherever these terrorist groups are at. Yes, I know that part of that effort to try to minimize terrorist attacks is through the war that we try to do to secure our borders. All of them; air, sea, and land. But the primary mission still is about preventing terrorism, not just the border security. That's a tool to be able to accomplish that.

I just raised that with you. I want to make sure that the next Homeland Security Secretary has a very detailed knowledge and understanding about the terrorist groups, their capabilities, and is tracking that on an absolute daily basis, and that they understand that is their top mission. With that, I will yield back to the Chair.

Chairman PAUL. Senator Johnson.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHNSON

Senator JOHNSON. Governor Noem, welcome, and thank you for your willingness to serve.

You will be taking over a massive Federal Government agency, 240,000 employees. It's probably too massive. I think had I been there back then, I do not think I would have assembled these 22 different agencies in this massive Department. But that's what we have.

It's a department that the previous administration, I think, has completely misused. Instead of using Customs and Border Protection to do that, to protect our border and secure it, they have utilized those resources to incentivize a massive influx of illegal immigration. Instead of using the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency to do that, they instead engaged in mission creep and utilized it to censor Americans with the misinformation board.

I am concerned about disaster relief, just Federal disaster relief in general, creating greater and greater and increasing levels of moral hazard, resulting in higher costs of these disasters. Let us cover each one of those kind of in order. How do you gain control over a massive agency whose resources and personnel have been misused? How do you root out those individuals who instead of securing our border, opened it up and facilitated this.

Ms. NOEM. Senator, this has been a big topic of conversation in most of the meetings that I have had with the Members of this Committee, was how do we fix this agency, which the reputation is that it's broken and dysfunctional. I think the question I get asked the most is, "Why would you want to head up such a dysfunctional department?" I would say that because the mission of the Department is to secure the homeland and our people.

It's our biggest vulnerability right now, and we have a President that's not enforcing the law. I do not believe the law should be unequally applied. Everyone should be subject to our laws, and a nation without laws and without borders is not a nation at all.

I will work by ensuring one of the things that Senator Ernst talked about, people have to show up for work. I think there's going to be a majority of people who do not have their primary mission to secure the homeland. That if they do not want to show up for work, then maybe they are just not truly passionate about protecting America. I think they need to do that, and they need to recognize what their job is.

The morale in DHS is very low. I am going to let people do their jobs. I am going to remind them what their jobs are. Some of these border patrol agents have not been able to do their jobs for a very long time. They have been processing paperwork and facilitating an invasion when they should be back securing our border, which is why they were recruited and wanted to serve there to begin with.

We are going to build partnership with local law enforcement, with ICE, and task forces. We are communicating, again, with local sheriffs, and mayors, and law enforcement to partner together. When you talk about the fact that this is such a broken agency that needs so much improvement, a lot of it goes back to why we are created, and are we fulfilling that mission and making sure that these individuals are getting back on task.

Senator JOHNSON. Under my chairmanship and under the Trump Administration, we did rename a part of DHS, so the Cybersecurity and Information Security Agency. I, in no way, shape, or form ever contemplated that the sub-agency within DHS that was really fo-

cused on securing us against the cyber threats and other threats to our infrastructure, would ever be used to violate the Constitution the way it was used to violate the Constitution under the Biden Administration.

This administration's been completely opaque. We do not have the information to know and the communication in terms of what all happened here. So, my question relates to how they misused CISA. Will you commit to providing the transparency, providing the information, investigate it yourself, but provide this committee, my subcommittee, the information to expose the truth to the American public. But even more importantly, propose a piece of legislation based on our investigation, based on those results, to fix it so that no administration can ever misuse the language of the law to commit that kind of unconstitutional act and violate people's First Amendment rights.

Ms. NOEM. Yes Senator, I look forward to working with you on that. I think what we saw during the COVID pandemic, the actions of CISA, their misinformation and disinformation. Campaign materials they were putting out was shocking. Shocking at what they were doing to decide what was truth, what was not, and how they were trying to manipulate the American people. We saw it in elections and Russia influences as well.

Ensuring that they cannot do that in the future under any administration would be a priority. That they stay doing what they are supposed to do, and hardening our systems, and working with local officials to do that is a priority. I would look forward to working with you on legislation should you wish to reign them in.

Senator JOHNSON. The first step in that process is to expose the truth. To find out who these bad actors were, expose who they were, hold them accountable. I mean, that is crucial that we take that first step. Again, I look forward to working with you on that.

The tragedy of the fires, the more we learn, the more we understand that not only was it predictable, it was predicted, which means it was in preventable. Again, you cannot prevent the initiation of those fires, but you certainly can prevent them from raging into the tragedy that they became.

The dozens of people who have lost their lives, the hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of property damage. It's not just California, though. I mean, again, that was grotesque mismanagement. That could have been prevented. You cannot prevent a hurricane. You cannot prevent floods, but you certainly can try and start reducing the moral hazard that we have allowed to explode, quite honestly, by the Federal Government rushing in immediately, no questions asked.

Just tell us how big a check you want. What can you do in your new role to try and start reducing, over time, the moral hazard that we have created in this country with Federal disaster relief?

Ms. NOEM. Senator emergencies and disasters are always locally led. They are led by the local communities and leaders. That's because they are much more responsive, and much better-informed on how to bring relief, and to get those emergency services there to meet the need. Then it's State-supported and federally resourced.

Which means that when we come in, that we are supporting what the mission is, what those emergency operations and plans are that the local city and county, and then also the State, has implemented, and do what we can to fulfill the mission of our programs.

One of the things that FEMA's not doing today that I think we should be doing is streamlining communications. We saw this in New Orleans, we saw it in other terrorist attacks in the country, and you just referenced it as well about the American people not getting the truth. Senators, not getting the truth and the transparency that we need is that I believe FEMA can always put out a blueprint for what a response would be should something terrible happen.

When we look at the Secret Service, what happened in Butler, we saw that communication was an issue. That the Secret Service was not communicating, and balls were getting dropped with local authorities, local law enforcement. We can put forward a blueprint for how communication can happen and be streamlined between the Federal Government, the State, and the local entities so that should something happen, this is how we talk to each other, to make sure that the public has the facts. They are not getting misinformation, which happened with the New Orleans terror attack just recently, but also up in Pennsylvania as well.

That blueprint is what we do at the State level that FEMA has failed to do. To proactively educate the public on what everybody's roles are, what we do should something happen. Whether it be a natural disaster, or a terrorist attack, or an emergency response needed, that we can put out those blueprints ahead of time, educate people, train those local entities, which they currently do to a certain extent today. But not good enough to really know that not only can the resources be pre-deployed in many of these situations so that they are more readily accessible, but also how are we going to communicate and make sure everybody's on the same page so that we can be much more efficient.

I wish that we would have had different leadership and a different Governor in California, or we might have a different result there. But in the Department of Homeland Security, we can do all that we can to make sure that the people that live in California know that they are going to get a response from the Federal Government that's appropriate. That we did all that we could to make sure that they had the information ahead of time so they could protect their selves when they do have a failure in leadership like we have seen.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, and good luck.

Ms. NOEM. You bet.

Chairman PAUL. Since Senator Johnson brought up California fires, I have to interject here. We talked about burn policies. These are local policies, how we try to not have so much brush and things like that. They are also next to the largest body of water in the world, the Pacific Ocean. I see these homes all burning on the beach in Malibu, and I am like, "Wow, if they just had a generator and a hose, you start sucking the water out of the Pacific Ocean."

But you could do more than that. You could pump it and put it in cisterns up in the hills, a mile or two in. It does not rain very

much there. But why don't they take the ocean water, put it in cisterns, and have a bunch of water ready when a wildfire shows up. But it's like, once again, bad local government. Senator Gallego.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR GALLEGO

Senator GALLEGO. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Governor, for your attention. I appreciate us meeting last week and our frank conversation.

In partly following-up to our conversation. In recent years, I have been in very close contact with our Arizona border communities, which are unlike other border communities, and about the funding needs to address migrant influxes through the Shelter and Services Program (SSP). Without this funding, border communities must bear all the financial burden for national immigration challenges and the broken border, in general.

That means police, fire, hospital systems, in general, anything of that. At the same time, they will also face the potential challenges of street releases. Again, these are very small towns on the border. Having thousands of people being released becomes both burdensome security issues and just not fair to them.

We get lumped in with places like New York and Chicago about how they do their shelter programs. Our shelter programs are not the same as New York and Chicago. We do not permanently put people in apartments or anything of that nature. We are trying to move people away from the border so that way they do not become a burden on these very small communities.

I am very highly concerned, as I told you in our meeting, when the SSP program becomes politicized and to the point where we get lumped in with those programs. I do not think are effective and are actually counterproductive. It ends up depriving our small Arizona borders of these very vital funds that they need.

As DHS Secretary, how would you ensure that border communities are not left to respond to and pay for these immigration influxes, the broken border system on their own? Will you commit to helping really not politicize or destroying the Social Service Block Grant (SSBG) program to the point where places that are doing things correctly, like Yuma, Arizona, like Pima County, like Cochise County, are not lumped in with the people that are doing things incorrectly, like New York State and Chicago.

Ms. NOEM. Senator, thank you for the conversation in your office about the program, FEMA, the Southern border, and the challenges. Then also the difference between your State and how you utilize funds versus other States.

I would say that my hope is that if given the opportunity to serve as Secretary, that the Federal Government would no longer, and I believe as President Trump has promised the American people, facilitate an illegal alien invasion, and that your communities in Arizona would no longer have the issue with having people in your small towns and communities that you need to figure out how to take care of and get them to where they want to go in other places of the country.

The President has promised he will secure the border. That we will uphold our nation's laws, and that he will do that to the benefit and be putting America first, again. I know we talked exten-

sively about the SSP program and how you have utilized it. But getting these programs back to what they were intended is important to FEMA as a disaster response agency. Some of the facilities that have been utilizing these types of funds and dollars need to be reevaluated to make sure that it's truly doing the service that is upholding our nation's laws.

Senator GALLEGO. Certainly, understand reevaluating, especially how some of these States have been using it. In the ideal world, we do not have to have a program like that because we do not have this mass of humanity that's coming toward our borders. But even under the first Trump Administration, we actually still needed it also. This is why my concern is to not get rid of this program because, again, these small communities, I am talking communities of maybe 10,000 people, maybe only six or seven cops are going to end up really bearing the brunt.

We are not a big State. We cannot really compensate for these types of losses. These small communities are also largely in counties that are mostly rural with a lot of Federal land. They actually do not even have a tax base.

When the broken immigration system sends people to these borders, and it, we end up not having to have enough, these communities do not have enough money to pay for cops, firefighters overtime for hospital systems. It's that type of program that keeps us, keeps these small communities afloat. I just want to make sure you know that, again, this does not become politicized and that we are kept separate from, I think, the mistakes that other States have taken on.

Moving on, in Arizona, we have large parts of the border. They run through tribal lands. We have 22 recognized tribes and have great relationships with these tribes. They want to be collaborative partners when it comes to border security. We have some great programs that have worked in the past. For example, the Shadow Wolves Program with the Tohono O'odham Nation. It's a really good example, collaborative program of tribal law enforcement that worked with DHS to make sure they stop human smuggling and cartels going through their borders.

But as DHS Secretary, what is your plan to consult with our border tribes and work together to balance both national security, but also their sovereignty?

Ms. NOEM. Senator, I believe that my experience as Governor and my relationship with working with our tribes is going to be an incredible, powerful tool for me to bring to bear at the Department of Homeland Security to work on how we secure our Southern border, but still respect their sovereignty, and still be able to work with them.

This year, when looking at public safety issues that we had in South Dakota and their lack of ability to hire tribal officers on our reservations in South Dakota, I offered to train Federal law enforcement officers, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) officers, but also their tribal police in South Dakota at no cost to our tribes. It's been an incredible, powerful tool that we have had to build relationships. Those tribal police had the chance to go through academy with the local, maybe, deputies from the counties and the State highway patrol troopers that were coming on board.

Those relationships have built partnerships in our State that we did not have before. The Shadow Wolves training opportunity is incredible that was down in Arizona, that you spoke of, too. In looking into that program, I would like to continue to build on that and perpetuate in the future so that our tribes not only have an opportunity to have a secure border, but also have it reflect their values and their culture, and have their own people be a part of the solution. Then even when it comes to the infrastructure of the wall, that we are respecting that, and their landscapes, and their land as well.

I look forward to working with you as we move into this next administration to be able to protect our country, and then work and respect our tribes as we do so.

Senator GALLEGO. Thank you. President Trump and some of his other potential staff and advisors have been very vocal about implementing a mass deportation strategy. Talking to my agricultural community, my dairy community, they have concerns that this approach will lead to workforce shortages that will further drive up the costs of everything. Something that we have really been working hard across, I think, a bipartisan manner, to bring down the costs of everything. Unfortunately, this would reignite inflation.

What is your plan to ensure safe and legal immigration processes for agricultural workers while protecting local agricultural operations, including those both in of our home States?

Ms. NOEM. Senator, President Trump has been very clear that his priority is going to be deporting criminals. Those who have broken our laws and perpetuated violence in our communities. That will be the priority. As I spoke earlier with our statistics, having over 425,000 of those with criminal convictions in our country, that will be a focus that we need to tackle right away. It will be a big one. Beyond that, his next priority is going to be those with final removal orders, and focus on those individuals who have long overstayed and that there is a consequence for ignoring our Federal laws.

Beyond that, we will continue conversations. As you know, I am a farmer, and a rancher, and come from an agricultural State. We will work together to make sure that laws are followed. It is the Senate and the House that puts forward the laws. I, as Secretary, uphold the law. You determine what that is and debate and discussion. I will be transparent, and share as much information and insight as I have with my background and experience, and continue to work with you.

Chairman PAUL. Senator Moreno.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR MORENO

Senator MORENO. First of all, thank you, Governor, for being here to testifying before this Committee, and for your service. Not just to your State, but to America.

Nine years ago, today, we met in probably the coldest day I have ever been in my life in Iowa.

Ms. NOEM. Yes that's true.

Senator MORENO. As you and I were making phone calls and whipping up votes for Republicans in Iowa, my wife, Bridget, who's here, got a chance to meet you, and we left Iowa saying that per-

son's really going to go far. Here we are, nine years later. You have been an amazing Governor, amazing congresswoman, and now you are going to make an even better Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

I think sometimes in DC we tend to complicate things. There is a current Secretary of Homeland Security. Why don't we take this opportunity to do a little job review and compare and contrast him to you. If you don't mind, I will ask you some questions and you can give me an answer.

Secretary Mayorkas allowed about, you said it, just about 400 people on the terror watch list to come into this country illegally. If you were confirmed as Secretary of Homeland Security, how many people on the terror watch list would you allow into this country?

Ms. NOEM. Senator, we would work every single day until we had that number was zero. If you look at the previous Trump Administration over his entire four years in comparison to Joe Biden's number, President Trump, it was 11 that were then removed from the country and faced consequences. When you look at the 382 that Joe Biden has let in and the policies continue, it is shocking and needs to be changed immediately.

Senator MORENO. Mayorkas has let in about 12,000 murderers. How many would you target to let into this country?

Ms. NOEM. My goal every day would be have no murderers allowed into this country in our communities.

Senator MORENO. Mayorkas has allowed 16,000 rapists. How many would you target to let in?

Ms. NOEM. Every day I would work to make sure that there was none let into this country.

Senator MORENO. He let 600,000, Mayorkas, 600,000 people with criminal convictions. How many would you allow in?

Ms. NOEM. We would work every day to make sure people are safe, and that those with criminal convictions are immediately removed.

Senator MORENO. How many private jets would you have the United States taxpayers have fly into foreign countries to pick up people to bring them here?

Ms. NOEM. Senator, we will no longer be undertaking that mission of the Department of Homeland Security.

Senator MORENO. So, not 700,000 individuals on private jets over the last four years. You would not have any. No.

Ms. NOEM. I will be working with President Trump to put in place his agenda and adherence to our Federal laws.

Senator MORENO. How many illegals will you plan to house in luxury hotel rooms in Manhattan at a cost of $6,000 per month?

Ms. NOEM. Clearly, Senator, during this election, the American people said they did not support that, and that that would not be a part of this new administration.

Senator MORENO. How about sex change operations for illegals? How many would of those would you suspect you would fund?

Ms. NOEM. Senator, I believe that the Department of Homeland Security will be reevaluating its mission in this country to not allow that going forward under President Trump's goals.

Senator MORENO. If you had any legal migrant that was in this country and they committed a crime, would you offer them airfare from one State to another to evade law enforcement?

Ms. NOEM. Sir, I will be following this nation's laws and the Constitution, and make sure that all laws are adhered to.

Senator MORENO. If you had been the head of the Department of Homeland Security a year or so ago, would you have closed a detention center in Georgia that would have allowed the release of somebody charged with a crime?

Ms. NOEM. Sir, I do not have the specifics to that situation, but certainly that would not be something that I would want to have under my watch.

Senator MORENO. Just to be clear, Laken Riley would be alive today if you had been the Secretary of Homeland Security?

Ms. NOEM. Yes. Senator, my hope is that that would be true.

Senator MORENO. Let's switch to another part of the disgraceful immigration laws that Biden and Mayorkas, by the way, objectively, has been the worst cabinet member ever in the history of the United States of America.

Let's talk about temporary protective status, temporary being the operative word. Mayorkas and Biden just extended temporary protective status again through 2027. Will you continue to corrupt Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to allow some sort of open borders agenda? Will you use hot weather of 80 degrees and sunny beaches in El Salvador as a reason why people have to stay in America and not safely return?

Ms. NOEM. Senator, this program has been abused and manipulated by the Biden Administration, and that will no longer be allowed and these extensions going forward. The way that they are, the program was intended to be temporary. This extension of over 600,000 Venezuelans as well, is alarming when you look at what we have seen in different States, including Colorado with gangs doing damage and harming the individuals and the people that live there.

Senator MORENO. In terms of our border, like the physical border. I have been there many times. You have been there many times. Who should be in charge? Who should have operational control of our border? The United States government or the Mexican drug cartels?

Ms. NOEM. Senator, the United States needs to control our borders and secure them.

Senator MORENO. If this were a job interview in the private sector, and you had somebody like Alejandro Mayorkas in charge, and we had the opportunity to upgrade to you, this would be the greatest upgrade in history of the United States of America.

But I am going to end my time with a startling statistic and actually a challenge to the Democrat Party. When Mayorkas was confirmed, every single Democrat voted to confirm him, and six Republicans joined. All 50 Democrats in that confirmation. If we get to the vote, and hopefully, Mr. Chair, we could do that Monday, because we cannot wait one single day without you being in charge of that department. We should have 100 percent, 100 Senators vote for your confirmation.

This will be the litmus test in my mind as to whether we have a Democrat Party that's actually serious about doing bipartisan things like securing this country and protecting our citizens. Any Democrat that voted for Mayorkas that does not vote for you, should be in front of their voters and removed from office.

Thank you for serving, Bryon. Thank you for being here, for putting up with the nonsense that you guys have had to put up with over the years. You are going to make an amazing Secretary of Homeland Security. Thank you for being here.

Ms. NOEM. Thank you, Senator.

Chairman PAUL. Senator Slotkin.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR SLOTKIN

Senator SLOTKIN. Thanks for being here, and thanks for our time in my office. Governor, I am a former CIA officer, joined right after 9/11, and served three tours in Iraq alongside the military. I am actually the first CIA officer in the Senate. To me the most important thing, again, as a Democrat from a State that Trump won, right, on the same ballot, we both won, I understand we are going to have different policy opinions.

I certainly understand that the President or incoming President has the right to nominate whoever he wants. Those are not the issues for me that I am going to spend my time on. The ones that I care about the most relate to the mission of the organization when it was founded, protecting the homeland.

I think, to me, it's one thing when there's campaign rhetoric or politicization of things, everyone does that on both sides of the aisle in this Committee and in our line of work. But when it comes to actually protecting the country, you do have to be clear and honest about facts and not conflate things.

It is just important to me that I know, particularly since you do have one of the intelligence agencies within the Department of Homeland Security, that you are going to call a spade a spade. Right? The most recent acts of domestic terrorism in New Orleans, horrible incident in Nevada, had nothing to do with migrants. Correct?

Ms. NOEM. Correct.

Senator SLOTKIN. They were homegrown American citizens. One of them was actually in a very elite military unit. It is horrible. It's one of the hardest things to catch; the sort of lone wolf, radicalized American citizen.

But I want to protect ourselves. Our most recent examples of domestic terrorism were not what we have spent the majority talking about today; crime from a migrant. I do not dispute there is crime, but I just want to know, and I want to hear from you as an intelligence officer, that you are going to speak about real threats and not blow something up, politicize something, make something more exciting, because that's maybe what the President wants to hear. But your mission to protect and defend the Constitution means calling honestly what the threats are to the country. Can you just give me a yes or no, please?

Ms. NOEM. Yes, Senator. I will be as transparent and factual every day with you and the American people as possible based on the information that I have. I do not know if the investigations are

closed in New Orleans and in Nevada, but what we know so far and needs to be relayed to the American people needs to be the truth and facts.

Senator SLOTKIN. We have talked a lot about border security as a CIA officer, I think one of the only people on this Committee who's actually worked on protecting the homeland. I am a Middle East terrorism and militia expert by training. I believe deeply in it. Every country of the world gets to decide who comes inside its borders. That's not a radical concept.

But I think I have been open with this Committee that it is also on us to fix the deeply broken legal immigration system. I am glad to hear that you are going to carry out the laws on the immigration system. Democrats and Republicans are to blame that we have not fixed this system. But I also believe you cannot fully control the border unless you give people that we need for our companies, for our economy, a legal, vetted way to come here.

Do you believe in legal, vetted immigration and that we need more of it in the United States?

Ms. NOEM. I do believe we need to follow our legal immigration laws and that it needs to be vetted.

Senator SLOTKIN. Do you believe that our economy depends and needs some level, just like your family came from Norway and on economic drive and wanted a better life?

Ms. NOEM. Immigration's always been a part of our history and will be a part of our future. We just need to make sure that we are adhering to our nation's laws, which this body has the ability to continue to change and to put in place.

Senator SLOTKIN. I am with you.

Again, going back to the fact that you will pledge an oath to the Constitution, not to President Trump, just like every other nominee. President Trump said in November that he's willing to use law enforcement, National Guard, or even active-duty military to go after, "The threat from within the United States." I don't know exactly what he was talking about.

But we have recent examples from your predecessors at DHS where Federal law enforcement were sent into a State, in this case, Oregon, without coordination with the Governor. Those Federal law enforcement officers (FLEO), at the time, were putting down threats to Federal buildings, and they were legitimate threats. I do not dispute there was destruction of property going on during a bunch of protests and riots. I do not dispute that.

But they were not wearing insignia. We talked about this. They were not wearing any markings. People were arrested by folks in fatigues with no names, no idea who they were, like right out of a bad Hollywood movie. If the President asks you to send in Federal law enforcement to a State without coordination of that Governor, would you support that action?

Ms. NOEM. Senator, my job, if nominated and sworn in as Secretary of Homeland Security, is to uphold the Constitution and follow the rules of this country. Yes, that will be the oath and the pledge that I will be making. My goal also is to work with you to ensure that we have situations that are always appropriate, that we are well defined on who we are——

Senator SLOTKIN. I just need to know. You are a former Governor.

Ms. NOEM. Yes.

Senator SLOTKIN. You can imagine that if Joe Biden sent in 700 Federal law enforcement under Secretary Mayorkas, without coordinating with you, I think we can agree you would be a little upset. I just ask that you give the same respect for coordination and we are very sensitive. People are worried about politicizing of law enforcement and the uniformed military. That's a bad thing. I hope we can agree.

Last, I look forward to visiting at the Northern border, the Gordie Howe Bridge, your help staffing that. We know across many administrations, staffing goals at DHS have not been met, and that's a problem. We really want to make sure that opens on time.

But I also want your assurances. You received FEMA assistance from Joe Biden's administration. Right? You had historic floods. You asked and requested of the administration, and you were given millions of dollars to help with that. I understand you do not like Gavin Newsom, but can you say in front of the American people that you will open the books to this Committee who does have oversight over FEMA, right? That you will give, open the books in a bipartisan way to ensure whether it's North Carolina, or California, or anywhere in between, that the American people can know that you are not playing politics with disaster assistance.

Ms. NOEM. Yes, Senator, I will work with you in this Committee to make sure I am following the Federal law and ensuring that you have information and transparency from us, and from DHS, and FEMA.

Senator SLOTKIN. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman PAUL. Senator Lankford.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR LANKFORD

Senator LANKFORD. Governor Noem, great to see you.

Ms. NOEM. Yes, great to see you, too.

Senator LANKFORD. Thanks for being here. Thanks for accepting this nod that the President has given you. For Bryon, thanks for both of you. You have walked through a lot. I have had the privilege of knowing you for a very long time since we have served together in the House of Representatives. I have the benefit of knowing your qualifications, and how strong you are in all these background issues, and how hard you work on these things. Because I have seen it firsthand. I appreciate you stepping into this because a lot of attention across the country will be focused on this. You know that fully well, and you have stepped into it.

For Governor Landry, my State and many folks in my State are praying for you and for your State. You have done a great job in leadership at this moment in a very tough time for Louisiana. We do not want to see acts of terrorism anywhere in our country. It's incredibly difficult days for a Governor. Thanks for your leadership on that as well.

I also have to tell you, Kristi, I have whined to my wife occasionally about the temperature that's coming on Monday. I am very excited about Trump's inaugural. But we are all going to be sitting

outside in about 12 degrees. I thought just for fun, I would check South Dakota on Monday. It's 1. [Laughter.] For a high.

Ms. NOEM. Yes, for a high.

Senator LANKFORD. I am going to stop whining about the temperature on Monday here in Washington, DC on it.

Look, I am going to run through a couple of things here. Because I know you, not everybody in Oklahoma knows you. The questions that I get from people, though, in Oklahoma, I want to be able to run past you, because they want to be able to know the answer to these things. I am just going to blitz through a whole bunch of them.

Will you use the legal authority that DHS already has to be able to close our border?

Ms. NOEM. Yes, Senator, I will work with President Trump to ensure that we are securing our border.

Senator LANKFORD. Thank you. There's a lot of things that this Congress needs to do. It has already been mentioned by Senator Slotkin as well, that we need to do to be able to close loopholes to be able to give you additional authority. But there's a tremendous amount of authority currently not being used, and Oklahomans, they are saying, "Is that about to be used?" They will be grateful to be able to hear that.

No other President has ever created a phone app to be able to facilitate a faster processing of aliens, called the CBP One app. It's been mentioned several times here. Will you use your authority to stop facilitating faster processing of illegal aliens into our country with the CBP One app?

Ms. NOEM. Yes, Senator. We will eliminate the CBP One app, maintain some of the data that's in it, that's critical to knowing who's in our country. But that app will no longer be in use.

Senator LANKFORD. Thank you. No other President has ever used the parole authority, just in general, humanitarian parole to facilitate faster processing of aliens into our country. Which leads to the catch and release we have all heard about. The Oklahomans that I talked to say, are we about to end the abuse of parole, and end catch and release. Is that about to stop?

Ms. NOEM. Senator, President Trump's been very clear that he will end catch and release.

Senator LANKFORD. Terrific. Folks want to know, will you use your authority with the funds that were given to you by Congress to actually build more wall rather than use the funding that's given to you, as the Biden Administration did, to do environmental remediation around the border rather than actual border wall and border structure?

Ms. NOEM. Yes. Senator, President Trump has been clear that he wants to build the wall.

Senator LANKFORD. Will you use your authority to be able to scan more vehicles? Obviously we have to get you the funding to be able to do this, to be able to scan more vehicles and individuals that are carrying fentanyl into our country through our ports of entry.

Ms. NOEM. Yes, Senator. We will continue to use technologies, but hopefully be able to use more with the resources that were

granted to scan those vehicles and know what's coming in and out of this country.

Senator LANKFORD. Last year, FEMA employees during disaster relief, were instructed by one of their supervisors that if they see a Trump sign or a Trump flag flying, to skip that house. To not stop by there, and tell them what their Federal Government can do for them. Will you allow FEMA employees, or any within DHS, to politicize their role in to pick and choose who gets help and who does not as an American?

Ms. NOEM. Senator, under President Trump's Administration, disaster and emergency relief will not be handed out with political bias. Every American will be responded to and treated equally.

Senator LANKFORD. That's what folks want to know. Will you review the Secret Service responsibilities to be able to go back through it and to say; are they focused on their primary mission, or is there something it could distract? Secret Service still chases down financial crimes. They are still chasing down child exploitation. Those are serious things for Treasury or for FBI to do. But there's a question is if that's the first priority for Secret Service?

Ms. NOEM. Senator, the Secret Service is in need of dramatic reforms. They do have a protective detail element that is their priority and also an investigation side. My understanding is that that investigation side is often used to train the protective detailed officers, but clearly, they are not focusing on what their true duty is. It needs to get back onto what they were created for, and that was the protective detail mission and emergency situations that they need to help plan, and prepare for, and defend.

Senator LANKFORD. Thank you. This Committee made a request to the Secretary of Homeland Security last year, and by the way, also the head of the FBI, to be able to come before this Committee and to do what every Secretary of Homeland Security has done for the last 20 years. Every single year, unbroken until last year. Then the Secretary refused to come before this Committee in an open session and talk about national threats.

Now, the former Chairman protested strongly to the Biden Administration and DHS they were not coming, but they still refused to be able to come. Will you come before this Committee and talk about the threats, openly, so the American people can hear them in a public forum?

Ms. NOEM. Yes, Senator. Senator Peters and I discussed this quite a bit in our meeting as well. I have committed to come and give that briefing to this Committee and to the American people.

Senator LANKFORD. Thank you. We need that. Let me tell you another challenge we have had with Homeland Security in the past four years. When we ask for data and for information, we get, "I will get back to you on that." When we ask again, and again, and again and again, we get the same statement, "I will get back to you on that."

Now, I can go down the street to the command center where they actually get the data in live and they have it up on big screens, and they are tracking exactly what's happening on the Southern border to the minute. But if I ask for what happened last month, they will say, "We are still gathering that data." We are not asking for anything other than what Congress is supposed to get; that's

the ability to be able to see data and to have real oversight over DHS. That has been a failure of this DHS, along with multiple other issues on that.

When we requested the data for basic things like how many special interest aliens were allowed across the border. If it was last year, we had to find out on our own. It was 70,000 people that were targeted by this administration as a potential national security risk that were not just founded at the border, that were released when they were founded at the border. 70,000 people just from last year in the country right now that this administration declared at the border they are a potential national security risk.

Now, I know you are not going to do that. But when we ask for the data and for the information, when we say, how's the National Vetting Center (NVC) working, do you have the connection between it to be able to screen individuals there? We are just doing our oversight responsibility. You have served in Congress before, and did a great job on that, and did oversight. We want to still be able to do the same thing. Will you provide data to this Committee so that we can cooperate with you to help.

Ms. NOEM. Senator, I will follow the law and be transparent with you, and allow you to do the due diligence toward oversight that you are tasked with.

Senator LANKFORD. I have absolutely no doubt about that, Governor. I have absolutely no doubt. Looking forward to you serving that role. Thank you.

Ms. NOEM. Thank you.

Chairman PAUL. Congratulations, Governor Noem. You are almost done. We have been through a lot of questions. I think you have handled the questions very well, and I am going to ask a couple questions, and I think the Ranking Member has a few, and I think we will be done very shortly.

I think a lot of Americans, including some conservatives, misunderstand the First Amendment. They think the First Amendment says that Facebook has to publish my opinion, or The Wall Street Journal has to publish my opinion, or we need to force them to be fair. That's not what the First Amendment's about at all. The First Amendment really does not apply to telling private companies what we can or cannot say. YouTube censored me, and I despise their policy. They actually took down speeches I made on the floor. But really, I do not have a legal recourse other than I can complain about YouTube being unfair and not hosting both sides of an issue.

However, with the government, though, there is a rule. The First Amendment specifically says, Congress shall pass no law banning or abridging speech. This is what really got us worried about what, not only the FBI was doing, but the Department of Homeland Security, actually meeting with these companies on a weekly basis.

And imagine the chilling effect of this. Imagine that there are cameras here that they are going to end their filming of this interview and then decide, well, what she said or what he said really was misinformation, and we should edit that out. Can you imagine? It is just hard for me to imagine that the media has not—which once defended the First Amendment—has not been in more of an uproar of the government meeting with the media to decide things. Some of this we did not know.

Then Elon Musk bought Twitter. People ask him, they said, you have paid $44 billion for Twitter. Isn't that too much? He said, I paid $44 billion to defend free speech. It has been an amazing service not only to open up the forum to more viewpoints, but to point out what the government was doing.

In this last week, we heard from Mark Zuckerberg who said that the pushiness, the coerciveness of government meeting with them was unprecedented, and that they pushed back. But he also said, worse than them just sort of telling him he should restrict speech, they also threatened him. They threatened to come after him through antitrust law. They threatened to remove parts of Section 230 of the liability protection. Just to imagine this bully nature of government.

I know you are opposed to that, but if you are confirmed and you are in a position of saying; we are just no longer sending people to meet with media. The way I describe it is to talk about constitutionally protected speech. Because some will say, "Oh, well, what about pornography or what about child trafficking?" Those are illegal. Those are not constitution protected speech. You have every ability to meet with that.

But for constitutionally protected speech, will you tell us in America that you will no longer be sending government agents to meet with the media?

Ms. NOEM. Yes, Senator. I will work with you to ensure that civil rights and liberties are protected, and that we are not in the misinformation and disinformation space, like the current DHS is.

Chairman PAUL. The only other thing I would ask on this basis is we will send requests. We sent requests previously, sometimes, and often, bipartisan requests, for information. The Twitter Files—Michael Shellenberger, Matt Taibbi, Bari Weiss—did a great job of showing what was happening in Twitter and how they were cooperating with government.

I think the other investigation that needs to occur is, who were the people in government they were talking to? Do they still work at DHS, and can we make sure that they are not in a position of authority? This is not something I am going to tell you to do. It's just a request that you have your own investigation. That you have people who work for DHS to say; we are going to look for people who are bringing their political bias to work and trying to influence speech, and restrict speech based on their bias, and help us in rooting that out and making sure that these people never again have that responsibility.

Because I do not think there's ever been anything like this as far as the restriction of speech. I think the election is largely going to stop and tilt things the other way. But will you help us by looking internally for those who are trying to restrict speech?

Ms. NOEM. Senator, I look forward to working with you on that mission.

Chairman PAUL. I do not have any other questions now, but I think Senator Peters and Senator Blumenthal, and we will see how it goes. We are going to start with Senator Peters with one more five-minute round.

Senator PETERS. Yes, I will be fairly brief.

We have had opportunity to talk at length about many issues. Again, I appreciate that, Governor. I just want to stress, going forward, and we have heard a lot of comments here, I think there's been a fair amount of political theater not as much as I know exist in other committees.

I have always strived, and I know Ranking Member, or now Chairman Paul, share the notion that we want to be a fact-based Committee and try to find tangible solutions to the tough problems that we face. Data is important. We have heard a lot of numbers being thrown around here. I do not have time to go through and challenge those numbers, some of them we do not even know where they came from. I do not think that's helpful to the very important mission, if confirmed, that you are going to be dealing with.

I hope in the future that we are actually dealing with facts. You have mentioned many times that you do want to deal with facts and real data. Again, we heard a lot here that's not real data. We should not operate that way. If confirmed, when we move forward, I am going to look forward to working with you based on the facts so you can understand where the real threats are, how we need to appropriate resources to make sure we are meeting those threats.

Let us take this hyper-partisanship out of such an important issue of homeland security. We have way too much partisanship in this country, and it's resulted in a polarization of people here. We have to come together as this country. We have to lock arms and understand that we are all proud Americans. We all want to do what's best for the American people and solve the issues so that are before us.

In that spirit, and certainly you have communicated that spirit to me. But in that spirit, I hope if confirmed, that is exactly what you will be bringing to this office. Let's move away from of this toxic political environment that we have in the country and celebrate what's great about our country and the spirit of bringing the American people together.

I have one question before we turn it over to other Members. As a Member of this Committee as well as the Armed Services Committee, I have focused a great deal on the safe integration of drones in our airspace while addressing the growing threats that drones possess. We certainly see what drones are doing in changing the face of warfare, whether it's in Ukraine and other battlefields around the world.

We are very concerned about the weaponization of those drones and what it could mean to the security here in the United States. I have proposed comprehensive legislation to extend authorities beyond just the FBI, and the Department of Justice (DOJ), and Homeland Security to local law enforcement. You mentioned in your comments about security for the Super Bowl, which is incredibly important, but we have to remember that that threat exists for all games.

In fact, one of the biggest supporters of my legislation is the National Football League NFL. In fact, we just had a recent playoff game that was delayed because of drones that flew into that playoff game. We are very concerned that you could have a drone with a grenade or an explosive device, which would be absolutely catastrophic. It's absolutely essential that we address this threat. What

we are seeing around the world and what we are seeing in daily activities should be a concern. I think this is just a matter of time. It's not if, it's when, and we need to be on the front end of that.

With that in mind, I want to remind folks that Congress just recently extended critical Counter-UAS Authority, Counter-drone Authority, only for a short time basis for the 12th time, we only do these little tiny short-term extensions, and we are not dealing with the problem comprehensively as we should. Those are going to expire on March 14th, a very short time from now.

My question for you, Governor, is if confirmed as DHS Secretary, will you commit to working with me and my colleagues to pass durable long-term authorities that will protect this country from what is a real threat? It's just a matter of time, and I do not want to have a horrible incident occur and people wonder why we did not take action beforehand. Please address that.

Ms. NOEM. Senator, I look forward to working with you in this Committee to address the threats we may face and the usage of drones in this country, and in relation to our national security interests and our Homeland Security interests. Thank you for bringing up the conversation today, because it is one of the areas within DHS that we have a responsibility to address in cooperation with Congress.

Senator PETERS. My first comments on bringing people together, please comment on that.

Ms. NOEM. I am looking forward to working with everyone, Republicans and Democrats, and everyone else in between that in this country that is focused on keeping America safe and secure for our future.

I would just point, Senator, to my background and my history. When I came to Congress, I worked with Republicans and Democrats on both sides of the aisle on many pieces of legislation. I was very happy to do so and focus on priorities on where we could agree, knowing we may disagree on some issues, but there was areas where we could keep the Federal Government accountable and do due diligence by the people that pay their taxes, and get up and go to work every single day.

As Governor, as well, I was Governor for every single person in the State of South Dakota, and they were my No. 1 priority. Everyone knew there that it did not matter if you were Republican or Democrat. That my focus was on them, and keeping our State thriving and free.

I look forward to continuing the work that I always have to be coming up with solutions and in a bipartisan manner, and hopefully my visits to your office and conversations reflected that and my intention on how I would conduct the role as the Department of Homeland Security Secretary.

Senator PETERS. I got a brief follow-up to that.

Ms. NOEM. Sure.

Senator PETERS. So, it's data and facts that we can all agree on that drive our policy and not political theater. Would you agree?

Ms. NOEM. Yes, certainly, sir. We need to be addressing facts and information rather than political theater. We also need to speak truth to facts. I think it's important that we are willing to confront our challenges head on and have those conversations. You will see

me back at your office door very soon to continue our work together.

Senator PETERS. Very good. Thank you.

Chairman PAUL. I want to second, basically, what Senator Peters has said on like records requests, I have told him and I plan on it, it is going to be administration of my party, but if he wants records and they are legitimate records, we are going to sign requests together, and we would like to get the records.

It also helps, though, and I think Senator Lankford mentioned this, is you ask a question, not you, but to the administration or any administration, they are like, "Oh, we will get back to you on it." Many times, I have even asked in advance, and I would suggest that we ask you in advance together. We ask in advance, if you are coming in a month, we say, we want this data, be prepared to talk about it. If you are, you will have many more friends on both sides.

Because what usually happens, and that's why I do not like springing the question, if it's a technical question that needs data, we are going to tell you in advance. At least I will. We want you to come prepared with that. That goes a long way because really what happens is we get stiff-armed. They say, we will get back to you, and we have no way to force you really other than we could cut the money off. And nobody ever does that.

But you will have 200,000 people working for you. My goodness, send your experts out, scour the records. It is true, I mean, facts are difficult, and sometimes there's different spins on the same set of facts, but I think that will help.

On the drones, I think we need more facts. I am more than willing to work with the Ranking Member on doing something on drones, but I do not want every sheriff out there shooting up in the sky at stuff. We got to figure out, we got to get the truth about do we really have drones everywhere flying all the time? How many of them are planes? How many of them are drones? Let's go through this and then let's figure out, and then let's talk about how we bring drones down.

If we interrupt and collect a lot of cellular signal through that, are we doing it with a warrant? What are we going to do with all the Americans data that we have collected to take down drones? If we have to take a wholesale tower's worth of data, there's a lot of innocent people's data going to be collected in that. Is that being gotten rid of?

I think there are ways we can get to the right place. Everybody, obviously, nobody wants drones coming down. The only other thing that I would add on drones before I turn over to Senator Lankford is, look, I am all for the NFL being protected. The Super Bowl being protected. They need to pay. They are a very rich organization. They want drones flying over in New Orleans. I am all for it. The NFL ought to pay the government if the government's doing it, or we ought to have private contractors doing it, but they should not just get it for free. Senator Lankford.

Senator LANKFORD. Thank you. Thanks, again. Senator Paul, you will remember this, there used to be a public-facing website that all Americans could actually get the data, what's happening on the border, what's actually moving. Then when the numbers got bad,

that seemed to disappear, and then we could not even get the data anymore.

I look forward to actually finding ways to be able to have everybody have the ability to be able to see some of this data as well on it. There's a reason that the DHS Secretary is the very first week of nominations. This is a really important role, and it is a nonpartisan role. It is a national security role, and we are grateful that you stepped into this. But it is important that we actually get you on the task to be able to make sure that it's out there.

You mentioned earlier in your testimony that we do have a morale problem at DHS right now. I think a lot of that is because people that signed up to be Federal law enforcement, to be able to protect the United States of America, have felt like they have been sidelined and they have not been able to do their job that they are really signed up for.

What I am hearing from you is you are going to allow them to do their job again. What has been historically true for a long time, that Federal law enforcement is there to actually help protect the country and the citizens in those communities, that you are going to allow them to do that. That is helpful.

Two quick things that I want to be able to mention on this. One is, right now, just in the structure of this, and we can talk about this a different time, but CBP facilities that are along the border are really run by a different entity called General Services Administration (GSA). They are not allowed to be able to do updates on their facilities or to design their facilities. Somebody who lives 3,000 miles away and who does not actually do border patrol work, they actually design and oversee their facilities. That's a problem that we have to be able to fix.

We have worked to be able to give more flexibility to CBP. That when they have difficulty and challenges there, they have the ability to be able to make those changes. But I am not going to ask you to make a commitment to this because this is just one of those detailed areas, but will you commit in the future to working with us? That this Committee and you can work together to be able to figure out how the folks that are on the field can actually make decisions about the facilities they work in?

Ms. NOEM. Yes, Senator, I commit to working with you on that issue.

Senator LANKFORD. That's terrific. Then I had a constituent in Oklahoma that is a hunter, like you are, like I am. He had a bag that he had some additional rounds that were in his bag that were left over from a hunting trip months before he packed his bag. Went on a vacation trip overseas. Went through security with his bag, when he got overseas and then left and came back, they scanned his bag and said, you have bullets, you have rounds in your bag. And he had, five that were in his bag that he did not even remember were left over in an outside pocket from a hunting trip before. They promptly put him in jail, and held him there and detained him there. Now, we worked through all the process to be able to get him back.

My question is that same bag went through Transportation Security Administration (TSA) security in my State before it went through security overseas. One of the questions that I have asked

is why were those rounds picked up there and not here? Now, we do not have the full answer to that yet, but that's just one of those TSA questions that we need to have. Americans right now are on planes all over the country, and they count on a certain level of security when they go through that process.

In the days ahead, will you work with me to be able to identify what are the challenges that we still face with the screening process, and to be able to correct those for the security of all Americans.

Ms. NOEM. Yes, Senator, I will work with you on that.

Senator LANKFORD. Thank you.

Ms. NOEM. I was surprised TSA did not come up more today, but that is an area in need of reform as well, and I look forward to working with you there.

Senator LANKFORD. I look forward to that. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman PAUL. The government needs a healthy dose of common sense. You know, bullets in your bag. I had a guy with bullets in the back of his pickup truck coming back from Mexico. We arrested him and took his truck. Only because the Institute of Justice fought for him for three years did he get his truck back. I mean, that's crazy. The things we do. Let's have some common sense, and hopefully someone overseeing it will allow that. Senator Blumenthal, you are going to finish this up.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Chairman Paul.

I am the last of your questioners, so that means I get unlimited amounts of time. [Laughter.]

Ms. NOEM. OK.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. No, not really. Not even close. I want to sort of continue the emphasis on bipartisanship and most especially on immigration reform. What this nation needs is comprehensive immigration reform. We know about the need for more H1–B visas, and other kinds of extensions of the visa program that enable the United States to have more workers that are desperately needed in certain areas of our country.

We know that there has to be better border security generally. We know we need to provide some kind of path to earn citizenship for a lot of the undocumented people in this country. We know it's possible because we did it in 2013. The U.S. Senate, as you will recall, passed a comprehensive immigration reform measure, overwhelmingly, it was bipartisan.

I was proud to be a part of it going through the Judiciary committee, but obviously, it will involve Homeland Security. I hope that we can continue, as Senator Lankford was a part of the effort in the last session, to expand on those efforts and move forward on a bipartisan basis toward bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform.

I want to talk to you a little bit about domestic terrorism which we discussed during my previous round, and I know you have discussed it afterward, including not just migrant crime and radicalization by ISIS, which are real and present problems. I also want to ask you about domestic terrorism events unrelated to groups outside our borders. We have seen a rise in antisemitism in this country. It has spiked beyond any prediction. I want to know

of your concerned with anti-Semite racist events; Charlottesville, Buffalo, Pittsburgh. There's a shorthand for these violent terrorist acts against people in the United States.

Ms. NOEM. Yes, Senator. I am very concerned about what we have seen in this country as far as antisemitic violence that has happened. In fact, last year during our legislative session, I brought legislation to more clearly define it so that we could fight it in our home State. I am hopeful I can work with you to continue to do what we can to make sure that we are addressing this rising threat and not facilitating it in this country.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. I just want to make sure that when you say we are protecting Americans against terrorism, that we are protecting all Americans, including, people in mosques, in churches, in synagogues, people regardless of their worship, their race, their background. We need to protect all Americans from antisemitism, racism, Islamophobia. I hope you will commit to that effort.

Ms. NOEM. Yes, correct. Thank you, Senator, and I look forward to working with you to do that.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. In my closing minute and a half, I just want to call your attention to an effort that I have led to help reunite children with their parents, children who were separated as a result of the so-called family separation policy in the last administration.

I have introduced a measure called Keep Families Together, not only to limit separation of families at or near ports of entry. But also, the Families Belong Together Act for several Congresses to help bring the children, the kids who were victims of this policy, and who still are not back with their parents. I hope that you will support that kind of effort.

Ms. NOEM. Senator, the Trump Administration never had a family separation policy. They had a zero-tolerance policy, which said that our laws would be followed. What I'm alarmed by is the over 300,000 children that went missing during the Biden Administration. When we talk about children and what they are potentially facing as far as victimization in this country, and the trafficking that's going on this administration's lack of desire to find out where those children are or what they may be going through is alarming to me.

I want to stop that.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Because, my time is expiring, I am just going to interrupt, again, with apologies, to say let's put aside——

Ms. NOEM. I cannot put aside 340,000 children.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Let's put aside what happened in the past. There are still 1,000 children who are separated and waiting to be reunited. I would like your commitment that you are going to continue the effort to reunite them with their parents.

Ms. NOEM. Senator, keeping families together is critically important to me and to this country. I am concerned about Laken Riley's family that they no longer have her. I am concerned about the fact that we have people in this country that do not know where their children are, or people in other countries who sent their children here and they have been lost by this administration.

Yes, my focus will be to keep families together. We will uphold our law, and we will make sure that we are doing everything we can to keep our children safe from the trafficking and the drug epidemic that's hit this country.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. I am going to end on an optimistic note and say I take that as a yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. NOEM. Thank you, sir.

Chairman PAUL. Thank you for your testimony. The nominee has filed responses to biographical[1] and financial questionnaires, answered pre-hearing questions submitted by the committee, and had their financial statements reviewed by the Office of Government Ethics.

Without objection, this information will be part of the hearing record with the exception of the financial data which are on file and available for public inspection in the Committee offices.

The hearing will remain open until 5 p.m. today, Friday, January 17th for the submission of statements and questions for the record. This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:33 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

[1] The information for Ms. Noem appears in the Appendix on page 59.

APPENDIX

Ranking Member Peters Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
Full Committee Hearing:
Nomination of Governor Kristi Noem
Date: January 17, 2025

Thank you, Chairman Paul.

Governor Noem, thank you for being here today.

I appreciate your efforts to make yourself available to meet with me and Committee staff as we work to conduct our due diligence and review your qualifications and background to serve as Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

As our third largest federal agency with more than 240,000 employees and an operating budget of more than $100 billion dollars, the Department of Homeland Security requires strong, stable, and principled leadership. Our nation faces serious threats and security challenges from securing our borders and combatting terrorism to preventing cyber-attacks and responding to our nation's increasing number of natural disasters and DHS is the first line of defense.

I appreciated the conversations we had ahead of today's hearing where we discussed the importance of ensuring that our nation's borders are safe and secure. While we must address the challenges, we face at our Southern Border we also need to ensure that there are sufficient resources to secure our Northern Border as well, including building out the Northern Border Mission Center.

That's especially important in my home state of Michigan which has two of our nation's busiest border crossings and where we'll be adding another span when the Gordie Howe International Bridge opens later this year.

To facilitate the lawful trade and travel at those ports of entry that are so critical to our economy I've worked on legislation to hire additional U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers to meet increased staffing demands. We must secure our borders, but we also know it is well past time to streamline our immigration and asylum processes as well. In addition to border security DHS is responsible for addressing many serious threats that face our nation.

Just a few weeks ago, Americans were shocked to see two horrific incidents in New Orleans and Las Vegas a deadly reminder that terrorism and radicalization remain very real and ongoing threats to our homeland security.

In my role on this Committee, I've made combatting foreign and domestic terrorism—as well as extremism a top priority. In this complex environment, it is essential that DHS continue to focus on all terrorism threats, track and report data to Congress and the American people, and coordinate between all components to ensure the Department is effective in addressing all terrorism threats.

We've also seen that persistent cyber-attacks are still a very serious threat. A recent attack from China-based hackers infiltrated the Treasury Department on top of the ongoing Salt Typhoon hack that compromised numerous U.S. telecommunications companies.

There is no question that DHS must continue to lead the way in protecting our networks from foreign adversaries, cyber criminals, and so-called hacktivists to prevent cyber-attacks from becoming increasingly devastating to our security and our economy.

Finally, the Department and the Federal Emergency Management Agency must continue the hard work of addressing the increasing number of natural disasters affecting our communities due to climate change.

From violent storms like the hurricane that brought destruction to states across the South to the devastating wildfires in California and countless other severe storms and flooding events across the country we need leadership at the Department that will ensure our nation is effectively responding to help communities when disaster strikes.

The safety and security of our nation and the American people depend on the Department's ability to effectively address these wide-ranging threats.

Thank you again for your willingness to serve and for being with us here today. I look forward to having a comprehensive discussion about how you intend to lead the Department through these serious national security challenges if confirmed.

Opening Statement of Governor Kristi Noem for Nomination as
Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Good morning, Chairman Paul, Ranking Member Peters, and distinguished members of the committee. I am honored to appear before you today as the nominee for Secretary of Homeland Security. I want to thank President-Elect Donald J. Trump for his confidence in my leadership, and the people of South Dakota for their fantastic support throughout my time in public service. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to Senator Cramer. He has been an invaluable source of wisdom throughout this process as he accompanied me to many meetings. I'd also like to express my gratitude to the Majority Leader of this esteemed body, Senator Thune. He has been an advisor as well as a friend to me over the years. I am so grateful for the generous support of these two individuals and their willingness to be here this morning to introduce me to the Committee.

I'm a wife, mother, a grandmother, a farmer, a rancher, a businesswoman, and a governor. I have spent my life in rural America. I understand what it means to work hard every day to build a better future for our kids and our communities. I come before you today with a deep sense of responsibility and humility as the nominee to lead the Department of Homeland Security. And also a commitment to the more than 330 million Americans, whom we will serve to work to keep them safe and secure in their homes, their communities and their country.

Before I proceed, I want to introduce my husband Bryon, who is here with me today. He is my 24 seven reminder that our dedication to public service is not a solo effort or result. I am so grateful to have him here with me today.

Securing our homeland is a serious, sacred trust that must be relentlessly pursued and can never be taken for granted. Being safe within our borders is an American right, yet Americans feel less safe than they have in decades. For the first time in 30 years, more than 40% of Americans are afraid to walk alone at night within a mile of their home.

President-Elect Trump is going to change that.

I have seen firsthand the challenges and opportunities facing our great nation. In the 20 years since the Department of Homeland Security was formed, the nature of the threats to our homeland has grown and evolved. This Department was created in response to the failures across government that led to the

September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. That reality is not lost on me, especially in the wake of the recent terrorist attacks over New Year's.

I have led South Dakota for the last 6 years with a focus every day on making our state safer, stronger, and freer. I have focused every day on making the best decisions not just for right now, but for generations to come. I have overseen a state budget of over $7 billion and a state employee workforce of more than 13,000, including more than 7,000 reporting to the Governor. I have addressed important issues like cybersecurity, human trafficking, drug interdiction, and natural disasters – the same challenges facing so many of you here and the people you represent back at home. I have secured our state and supported the rule of law. If confirmed as the 8th Secretary, that is the same approach I will take to leading the Department of Homeland Security.

As we face the evolving threats of the 21st century, the mission and success of DHS is more critical than ever. We must be vigilant, proactive, and innovative to protect the homeland. The challenges before us are significant. We must secure our borders against illegal trafficking and immigration. And we must safeguard our critical infrastructure against cyberattacks, respond to natural disasters, and combat terrorism.

I firmly believe that we can meet these challenges head-on with resolve, innovation, and collaboration with Federal and state partners. And Senators, I want your input.

Border security must remain a top priority. As a nation, we have the right and responsibility to secure our borders against those who would do us harm. And we must create a fair and lawful immigration system that is efficient and effective and that reflects our values. President Trump was elected with a clear mandate to achieve this mission. Two thirds of Americans support his immigration and border policies, including the majority of Hispanic Americans. I was the first Governor to send National Guard troops to Texas when they were being overwhelmed by an unprecedented border crisis. If confirmed as Secretary, I will ensure that our exceptional, extraordinary Border Patrol agents have ALL the tools, resources, and support they need to carry out their mission effectively. The same is true of my commitment to the outstanding men and women of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. They are responsible for apprehending, detaining, and deporting illegal immigrants. Getting criminal aliens off the streets and out of the country will help make American communities safe again. The bravery and dedication of the Border Patrol and ICE are unmatched, and I will restore dignity to their work.

The rising threat of cyberattacks also demands our utmost attention. Our critical infrastructure, from energy grids to financial systems, is under constant attack by foreign adversaries and criminal actors. As Secretary, I will prioritize a comprehensive, whole-of-government approach to cybersecurity.

In fact, in the coming days, we have to think and plan bigger, faster, and smarter. I fully acknowledge that we in Washington do not have all the answers. Therefore, I will leverage public-private partnerships and advance cutting-edge, state-of-the-art technologies to protect our nation's digital landscape. I have a proven track record doing this in South Dakota. I have helped make Dakota State University a global leader in cybersecurity education because we recognize the need to address this emerging threat. I will take this proactive approach if given the opportunity to serve as Secretary.

President-Elect Trump has been a tremendous friend to law enforcement, and I will do the same in the role of Secretary. As Governor, I have worked closely with law enforcement to make South Dakota safer. I have overseen hundreds of state troopers in the South Dakota Highway Patrol. On several occasions, I've convened groups of law enforcement from across our state to address policies that will make our people safer.

In fact, while some in this country were attacking law enforcement, we took the opposite approach. We recruited law enforcement officers to move to South Dakota, a state that respects their service and sacrifice. And we revamped our law enforcement training to provide the first ever state-led tribal-focused training opportunity.

We must remain vigilant against terrorism and against others who wish to do harm to our Country and its great people. I will ensure that our intelligence and law enforcement agencies are working together, hand-in-hand, fully equipped to detect, prevent, and respond to threats from radical ideologies or foreign adversaries.

This requires resources, coordination, and collaboration across all levels of government. Once again, I will seek your wisdom and your input in the months ahead. For the sake of the people we both represent, we must get this right.

I recognize that homeland security is not only about prevention but also about resilience. When disasters strike, as we know they will, the Department of Homeland Security must be ready to respond swiftly, efficiently, and effectively to protect the lives and property of Americans. As governor, I have worked

with FEMA in response to a dozen natural disasters in South Dakota. These have included historic floods, tornados, blizzards, wildfires, a derecho, and even a global pandemic. As Secretary, I will enhance our emergency preparedness and strengthen FEMA's capabilities. We will ensure that no community is left behind and that life-saving services like electricity and water are quickly restored.

As Secretary, I will oversee the Secret Service, an agency that is in serious need of reform. We all saw the threats to President-elect Trump last year – and the consequences of failure. That should never happen again. I have worked closely with my own gubernatorial protective detail and am familiar with what works and what doesn't. And I will bring that experience towards strengthening our Secret Service once again.

I am committed to working with this committee, with Congress, and with the dedicated men and women of the Department of Homeland Security to fulfill our mission. Together, we can ensure that the United States remains a beacon of freedom, safety, and security for generations to come.

Thank you for the opportunity and honor to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions. I hope to earn your trust and, hopefully, your vote as we embark on this critical work together.

REDACTED

U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Biographical Questionnaire
For the Nomination of Kristi Noem
to be Secretary, Department of Homeland Security

1. Basic Biographical Information

Please provide the following information.

Position to Which You Have Been Nominated	
Name of Position	**Date of Nomination**
Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security	November 12, 2024 (announcement by President-Elect)

Current Legal Name			
First Name	**Middle Name**	**Last Name**	**Suffix**
Kristi	Lynn	Noem	

Addresses					
Residential Address (do not include street address)			**Office Address** (include street address)		
[redacted]			**Street:** 500 East Capitol Avenue		
City: Pierre	**State:** SD	**Zip:** 57501	**City:** Pierre	**State:** SD	**Zip:** 57501

Other Names Used						
First Name	**Middle Name**	**Last Name**	**Suffix**	Check if Maiden Name	**Name Used From** (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)	**Name Used To** (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)
Kristi	Lynn	Arnold		X	**11/1971** **Est** ☐	**5/1992** **Est** ☐

Birth Year and Place	
Year of Birth (Do not include month and day.)	**Place of Birth**
1971	Watertown, South Dakota

Marital Status					
Check All That Describe Your Current Situation:					
Never Married	**Married**	**Separated**	**Annulled**	**Divorced**	**Widowed**
☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	☐

Spouse's Name (current spouse only)			
Spouse's First Name	**Spouse's Middle Name**	**Spouse's Last Name**	**Spouse's Suffix**
Bryon	Floyd	Noem	

Spouse's Other Names Used (current spouse only)						
First Name	**Middle Name**	**Last Name**	**Suffix**	Check if Maiden Name	**Name Used From** (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)	**Name Used To** (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	**Est** ☐	**Est** ☐

Children's Names (if over 18)			
First Name	**Middle Name**	**Last Name**	**Suffix**
Booker	Alf	Noem	
Kassidy	Corinne	Peters (née Noem)	
Kennedy	Sharon	Frick (née Noem)	

2. Education

List all post-secondary schools attended.

Name of School	Type of School (vocational/technical/trade school, college/university/military college, correspondence/distance/extension/online school)	Date Began School (month/year) (check box if estimate)	Date Ended School (month/year) (check box if estimate) (check "present" box if still in school)	Degree	Date Awarded
South Dakota State University	University	Est ☑ 1/1992	Est ☐ Present ☐ 5/2012	Bachelor of Arts, Political Science	2012

I also took classes at Northern State University, Mount Marty College, and the University of South Dakota.

3. Employment

(A) List all of your employment activities, including unemployment and self-employment. If the employment activity was military duty, list separate employment activity periods to show each change of military duty station. Do not list employment before your 18th birthday unless to provide a minimum of two years of employment history.

Type of Employment (Active Military Duty Station, National Guard/Reserve, USPHS Commissioned Corps, Other Federal employment, State Government (Non-Federal Employment), Self-employment, Unemployment, Federal Contractor, Non-Government Employment (excluding self-employment), Other	Name of Your Employer/ Assigned Duty Station	Most Recent Position Title/Rank	Location (City and State only)	Date Employment Began (month/year) (check box if estimate)	Date Employment Ended (month/year) (check box if estimate) (check "present" box if still employed)
State Government	State of South Dakota	Governor	Pierre, South Dakota	Est ☐ 1/2019	Present
Other Federal Government Employment	U.S. Congress – House of Representatives	U.S. Representative for South Dakota	Washington, DC and South Dakota	Est ☐ 1/2011	Est ☐ 1/2019
State Government	South Dakota House of Representatives	Representative for the 6th District	Pierre, South Dakota	Est ☐ 1/2007	Est ☐ 1/2011

Non-Government Employment	Family Worship Center	Children's Pastor	Watertown, South Dakota	Est 2007 ☑	Est 2010 ☑
Self-Employment	Racota Valley Ranch Partnership	Owner, General Manager, Other	Hazel, South Dakota	Est 1994 ☑	Est 2008 ☑
Non-Government Employment	Hamlin High School	Cheerleading Coach	Hayti, South Dakota	Est 1998 ☑	Est 2001 ☑
Other Federal Government Employment	USDA Farm Service Agency State Committee	Member	Huron, South Dakota	Est 1998 ☑	Est 2000 ☑
Non-Government Employment	Curt's Carpet Care	Saleswoman	Watertown, South Dakota	Est 1993 ☑	Est 1994 ☑
Non-Government Employment	Jim Moran	Home Health Care Assistant	Aberdeen, South Dakota	Est 1991 ☑	Est 1992 ☑
Non-Government Employment	Kessler's Grocery	Check Out Clerk	Aberdeen, South Dakota	Est 1990 ☑	Est 1992 ☑
Non-Government Employment	Al's Vacuum Center	Saleswoman	Aberdeen, South Dakota	Est 1990 ☑	Est 1992 ☑
Non-Government Employment	Ron Arnold	Farmer	Hazel, South Dakota	Est 1983 ☑	Est 1994 ☑

(B) List any advisory, consultative, honorary or other part-time service or positions with federal, state, or local governments, not listed elsewhere.

I served on the Commission for Agriculture in the 21st Century from approximately 1999 to approximately 2000.

4. Potential Conflict of Interest

(A) Describe any business relationship, dealing or financial transaction which you have had during the last 10 years, whether for yourself, on behalf of a client, or acting as an agent, that could in any way constitute or result in a possible conflict of interest in the position to which you have been nominated.

I am not aware of any actual or potential conflicts of interest. As part of the nomination process, I will consult with the Office of Government Ethics and the Department of Homeland Security's Designated Agency Ethics Official to identify and address any potential conflicts of interest. I commit to providing this Committee with a copy of any resulting ethics agreement.

(B) Describe any activity during the past 10 years in which you have engaged for the purpose of directly or indirectly influencing the passage, defeat or modification of any legislation or affecting the administration or execution of law or public policy, other than while in a federal government capacity.

Since 2019, I have had the honor of serving as Governor of the State of South Dakota. As the State's chief executive, my constitutional duty is to affect the administration or execution of law and public policy. I regularly engage in the state legislative process, including introducing and advocating for the passage of legislation aimed at serving South Dakotans. Further, my team and I regularly review all state programs and advocate for the passage of balanced budget legislation. From time to time, I have also been active on federal legislation or policy.

5. Honors and Awards

List all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, civilian service citations, military medals, academic or professional honors, honorary society memberships and any other special recognition for outstanding service or achievement.

- South Dakota Outstanding Young Farmer (1997)
- Young Leader Award for State of South Dakota (2003)
- Best of Congress Award (Working Mother Magazine) (2012)
- National Wheat Advocate Award (National Association of Wheat Growers) (2013)
- Fueling Growth Ethanol Award (Growth Energy) (2013 – most recent)
- Hero of Main Street (National Retail Federation) (2014)
- Wetland Conservation Achievement Award (Ducks Unlimited) (2014)
- Friend of Farm Bureau (South Dakota Farm Bureau) (2014)
- Hero of Main Street (National Retail Federation) (2015)
- Defender of Housing (National Association of Home Builders) (2016)
- Manufacturing Legislative Excellence Award (National Association of Manufacturers) (2016)
- APA Outstanding Leadership Award (American Psychological Association Practice Organization) (2016)
- Spirit of Enterprise Award (U.S. Chamber of Commerce) (2017)
- Friend of Farm Credit Award (AgriBank District Farm Credit Council) (2017)
- True Blue Award (Family Research Council Action) (2018)
- Golden Plow (American Farm Bureau Federation) (2018)
- Freedom to Fly Award (Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association) (2018)
- Conservative Achievement Award (American Conservative Union) (2018)
- Hero of Main Street (National Retail Federation) (2018)
- Friend of National Association of Federally Impacted Schools Award (National Association of Federally Impacted Schools) (2018)
- Guardian of Small Business Award (National Federation of Independent Business Inc.) (2018)

- Champion of Agriculture Award (American Agri-Women) (2022)
- Courage Under Fire Award (Safari Club International) (2022)
- NRA Distinguished Hunters Leadership Award (NRA Hunters' Leadership Forum) (2023)

6. Memberships

List all memberships that you have held in professional, social, business, fraternal, scholarly, civic, or charitable organizations in the last 10 years.

Unless relevant to your nomination, you do NOT need to include memberships in charitable organizations available to the public as a result of a tax deductible donation of $1,000 or less, Parent-Teacher Associations or other organizations connected to schools attended by your children, athletic clubs or teams, automobile support organizations (such as AAA), discounts clubs (such as Groupon or Sam's Club), or affinity memberships/consumer clubs (such as frequent flyer memberships).

Name of Organization	Dates of Your Membership (You may approximate.)	Position(s) Held
Daughters of the American Revolution	2024 – Present	Member
American Legion Auxiliary	2021 – Present	Member
Republican Governors Association	2019 – 2022	Executive Committee Member
National Governors Association	2019 – Present	Member
Federation of Republican Women	2019 – Present	Member
Codington County Republican Party	2019 – Present	Member
South Dakota Republican Party	2006 – Present	Member
Family Worship Center	1992 – Present	Member

7. Political Activity

(A) Have you ever been a candidate for or been elected or appointed to a political office?

Yes.

Name of Office	Elected/Appointed/ Candidate Only	Year(s) Election Held or Appointment Made	Term of Service (if applicable)
Governor of South Dakota	Elected	2022 2018	1/2019 – Present
U.S. House of Representatives	Elected	2016 2014 2012 2010	1/2011 – 1/2019
South Dakota House of Representatives	Elected	2008 2006	1/2007 – 1/2011

(B) List any offices held in or services rendered to a political party or election committee during the last ten years that you have not listed elsewhere.

None beyond the positions already listed in this questionnaire.

(C) Itemize all individual political contributions of $200 or more that you have made in the past five years to any individual, campaign organization, political party, political action committee, or similar entity. Please list each individual contribution and not the total amount contributed to the person or entity during the year.

None.

8. Publications and Speeches

(A) List the titles, publishers and dates of books, articles, reports or other published materials that you have written, including articles published on the Internet. Please provide the Committee with copies of all listed publications. In lieu of hard copies, electronic copies can be provided via e-mail or other digital format.

Over the years, I have published many articles, books, and other pieces. Please see Appendix A for a list of my publications based on a search of my records and other materials. I have included links to electronic sources found on the Internet.

(B) List any formal speeches you have delivered during the last five years and provide the Committee with copies of those speeches relevant to the position for which you have been nominated. Include any testimony to Congress or any other legislative or administrative body. These items can be provided electronically via e-mail or other digital format.

During the last five years, while serving as Governor of South Dakota, I have given many speeches and remarks. Please see Appendix B for a list of my formal speeches and remarks based on a search of my records and other materials. I have included links to electronic sources found on the Internet.

(C) List all speeches and testimony you have delivered in the past ten years, except for those the text of which you are providing to the Committee.

For my formal speeches and remarks from 2020 to 2024, please refer to Question 8(B) above and Appendix B. From 2011 to 2019, I served as the U.S. Representative for South Dakota in Congress and also gave many speeches and remarks. Please see Appendix C for a list of my speeches and remarks from 2015 to 2019 based on a search of my records and other materials. I have included links to electronic sources found on the Internet.

9. Criminal History

Since (and including) your 18th birthday, has any of the following happened?

- Have you been issued a summons, citation, or ticket to appear in court in a criminal proceeding against you? (Exclude citations involving traffic infractions where the fine was less than $300 and did not include alcohol or drugs.)

  No.

- Have you been arrested by any police officer, sheriff, marshal or any other type of law enforcement official?

  No.

- Have you been charged, convicted, or sentenced of a crime in any court?

  No.

- Have you been or are you currently on probation or parole?

  No.

- Are you currently on trial or awaiting a trial on criminal charges?

  No.

- To your knowledge, have you ever been the subject or target of a federal, state or local criminal investigation?

  No.

10. Civil Litigation and Administrative or Legislative Proceedings

(A) Since (and including) your 18th birthday, have you been a party to any public record civil court action or administrative or legislative proceeding of any kind that resulted in (1) a finding of wrongdoing against you, or (2) a settlement agreement for you, or some other person or entity, to make a payment to settle allegations against you, or for you to take, or refrain from taking, some action. Do NOT include small claims proceedings.

To my knowledge, I have not been a party to any public record civil court action or administrative or legislative proceeding in my personal capacity. I have not included any civil actions or proceedings naming me as a party in my official capacity as Governor of South Dakota.

(B) In addition to those listed above, have you or any business of which you were an officer, director or owner ever been involved as a party of interest in any administrative agency proceeding or civil litigation? Please identify and provide details for any proceedings or civil litigation that involve actions taken or omitted by you, or alleged to have been taken or omitted by you, while serving in your official capacity.

To my knowledge, neither I nor any business of which I was an officer, director, or owner has been involved as a party of interest in any administrative agency proceeding or civil litigation.

(C) For responses to the previous question, please identify and provide details for any proceedings or civil litigation that involve actions taken or omitted by you, or alleged to have been taken or omitted by you, while serving in your official capacity.

Not applicable.

11. Breach of Professional Ethics

(A) Have you ever been disciplined or cited for a breach of ethics or unprofessional conduct by, or been the subject of a complaint to, any court, administrative agency, professional association, disciplinary committee, or other professional group? Exclude cases and proceedings already listed.

Name of Agency/Association/ Committee/Group	Date Citation/Disciplinary Action/Complaint Issued/Initiated	Describe Citation/Disciplinary Action/Complaint	Results of Disciplinary Action/Complaint
South Dakota Government Accountability Board	Complaint dated September 28, 2021	A complaint was filed regarding a potential conflict of interest.	The complaint was resolved in August 2022.
South Dakota Government Accountability Board	Complaint dated September 28, 2021	A complaint was filed regarding alleged misuse of a state airplane to conduct state business.	The complaint was dismissed in December 2022.

(B) Have you ever been fired from a job, quit a job after being told you would be fired, left a job by mutual agreement following charges or allegations of misconduct, left a job by mutual agreement following notice of unsatisfactory performance, or received a written warning, been officially reprimanded, suspended, or disciplined for misconduct in the workplace, such as violation of a security policy?

No.

12. Tax Compliance

(This information will not be published in the record of the hearing on your nomination, but it will be retained in the Committee's files and will be available for public inspection.)

REDACTED

REDACTED

13. Lobbying

In the past ten years, have you registered as a lobbyist? If so, please indicate the state, federal, or local bodies with which you have registered (e.g., House, Senate, California Secretary of State).

No.

14. Outside Positions

☑ See OGE Form 278. (If, for your nomination, you have completed an OGE Form 278 Executive Branch Personnel Public Financial Disclosure Report, you may check the box here to complete this section and then proceed to the next section.)

15. Agreements or Arrangements

☑ See OGE Form 278. (If, for your nomination, you have completed an OGE Form 278 Executive Branch Personnel Public Financial Disclosure Report, you may check the box here to complete this section and then proceed to the next section.)

16. Additional Financial Data

All information requested under this heading must be provided for yourself, your spouse, and your dependents. (This information will not be published in the record of the hearing on your nomination, but it will be retained in the Committee's files and will be available for public inspection.)

REDACTED

SIGNATURE AND DATE

My responses to this questionnaire are based on the best of my recollection and information I reviewed in connection with preparing the responses. Any errors or omissions are unintentional.

I hereby state that I have read the foregoing Statement on Biographical and Financial Information and that the information provided therein is, to the best of my knowledge, current, accurate, and complete.

Kristi Noem

Kristi Noem

This 24th day of December 2024

Appendix A

Title	Publisher	Date
The US Congress for Kids: Over 200 Years of Lawmaking, Deal-Breaking, and Compromising, with 21 Activities	Chicago Review Press	11/1/2014
Governor's Column: Battling the Meth Epidemic	News.SD.gov	1/11/2019
Governor's Column: Expanding Broadband	News.SD.gov	1/18/2019
Governor's Column: Revitalizing Rural South Dakota	News.SD.gov	1/25/2019
Governor's Column: Protecting Our Way of Life	News.SD.gov	2/1/2019
Governor's Column: Advancing Agriculture	News.SD.gov	2/8/2019
Governor's Column: Putting Knowledge to Work	News.SD.gov	2/15/2019
Governor's Column: Every Child Deserves a Home	News.SD.gov	2/22/2019
Governor's Column: Making South Dakota an Example to the Nation	News.SD.gov	3/1/2019
Governor's Column: Protecting Our Free Press	News.SD.gov	3/8/2019
Governor's Weekly Column: Addressing the Nursing Home Crisis	News.SD.gov	3/15/2019
Governor's Column: South Dakota Grit In The Face of Storms	News.SD.gov	3/25/2019
Governor's Weekly Column: Enhancing Our Energy Potential	News.SD.gov	3/29/2019
Governor's Column: Advancing Habitat	News.SD.gov	4/5/2019
Governor's Column: Explaining Emergency Declarations	News.SD.gov	4/12/2019
Governor's Weekly Column: 100 Days of Progress	News.SD.gov	4/19/2019
Governor's Weekly Column: Leading the Way in Cybersecurity	News.SD.gov	4/26/2019
Governor's Column: Travel Matters	News.SD.gov	5/3/2019
Governor's Column: Reclaiming Hope	News.SD.gov	5/10/2019
Governor's Column: Don't Move Firewood	News.SD.gov	5/17/2019
Governor's Column: Honoring Heroes	News.SD.gov	5/24/2019
Governor's Column: Connecting South Dakota	News.SD.gov	5/31/2019
Governor's Column: Addressing the Stigma Around Mental Health	News.SD.gov	6/7/2019
Governor's Column: Husband, Father, Servant	News.SD.gov	6/14/2019
Governor's Weekly Column: Equipping our National Guard	News.SD.gov	6/21/2019
Governor's Weekly Column: Strengthening Families	News.SD.gov	6/28/2019
Supporting state employees, supporting Pierre	Capital Journal	6/28/2019
Combating human trafficking for a safer Rapid City	Rapid City Journal	7/1/2019

Governor's Column: Combating Meth for a Safer South Dakota	News.SD.gov	7/3/2019
Governor's Column: Future-Focused Agriculture	News.SD.gov	7/12/2019
Governor's Column: Living Within Our Means	News.SD.gov	7/19/2019
Governor's Column: Dealing with Disaster	News.SD.gov	7/26/2019
Governor's Column: Slowing the Spread of Zebra Mussels	News.SD.gov	8/2/2019
Governor's Column: Bringing in a New School Year	News.SD.gov	8/9/2019
Governor's Column: Enhancing Bee Habitat	News.SD.gov	8/16/2019
Governor's Column: USMCA: A Modernized Trade Agreement for South Dakota Producers	News.SD.gov	8/23/2019
Governor's Column: Industrial Hemp is Not the Answer.	News.SD.gov	8/29/2019
Governor's Column: Preventing Suicide	News.SD.gov	9/6/2019
Why I Won't Support Legalizing Hemp	Wall Street Journal	9/9/2019
Governor's Column: A Tribute to Heroes	News.SD.gov	9/13/2019
Governor's Column: Launching a Week of Work	News.SD.gov	9/20/2019
Governor's Column: Grit and Tradition	News.SD.gov	9/27/2019
Governor's Column: Serving South Dakota	News.SD.gov	10/4/2019
Governor's Column: Recognizing Native Americans' Day	News.SD.gov	10/11/2019
Governor's Column: Pheasant Hunting - A South Dakota Tradition	News.SD.gov	10/18/2019
Governor's Column: Protecting and Preserving Our Outdoor Treasures	News.SD.gov	11/1/2019
Governor's Column: Honoring our Nation's Veterans	News.SD.gov	11/8/2019
Open Hearts, Open Homes	News.SD.gov	11/15/2019
Governor's Column: Meth. We're On It.	News.SD.gov	11/22/2019
Governor's Column: Giving Thanks	News.SD.gov	11/27/2019
Governor's Weekly Column: Driving Opportunity	News.SD.gov	12/6/2019
Governor's Column: Lead Now.	News.SD.gov	12/13/2019
Governor's Column: Merry Christmas!	News.SD.gov	12/20/2019
Governor's Column: A Year of Progress	News.SD.gov	12/27/2019
Governor's Column: Keeping Resolutions for 2020	News.SD.gov	1/3/2020
The Republican Party Has Failed America, And Here's How It Needs To Change Now	The Federalist	1/8/2020
Governor's Column - Four Guardrails: A Path Forward for Decriminalizing Industrial Hemp	News.SD.gov	1/10/2020
Governor's Column: South Dakota is OPEN for Business	News.SD.gov	1/17/2020
Governor's Column: Connecting South Dakota	News.SD.gov	1/24/2020
Governor's Column: Strengthening Rural South Dakota	News.SD.gov	1/31/2020

Governor's Column: Growing South Dakota's Communities	News.SD.gov	2/7/2020
Governor's Column: Driving Economic Growth, Protecting Local Control	News.SD.gov	2/14/2020
Governor's Column: Creating Fairness for Businesses and Families	News.SD.gov	2/20/2020
Governor's Column: Paving a Path for Economic Progress	News.SD.gov	2/28/2020
Governor's Column: Preserving our Veterans Town	News.SD.gov	3/6/2020
Noem Weekly Column: South Dakotans Come Together to Respond to COVID-19	News.SD.gov	3/21/2020
Noem Weekly Column: During This Time of Uncertainty, Remember to Reflect	News.SD.gov	3/27/2020
Together, We Can Do This	News.SD.gov	4/3/2020
A Marathon, Not a Sprint: South Dakota's Fight against COVID-19	News.SD.gov	4/10/2020
Going on Offense against COVID-19	News.SD.gov	4/17/2020
Looking Out for Each Other	News.SD.gov	4/24/2020
Getting Back to Normal	News.SD.gov	5/1/2020
A Message and a Thank You	News.SD.gov	5/8/2020
Our Plan to Ramp Up Testing	News.SD.gov	5/15/2020
Thanking the Fallen	News.SD.gov	5/22/2020
South Dakota: Beautiful and Free	News.SD.gov	5/29/2020
Gov. Kristi Noem: George Floyd protests – They served their purpose. Now let's do this to solve the problem	Fox News	6/4/2020
Lessons Learned from COVID-19	News.SD.gov	6/12/2020
A Message to South Dakota Dads: Happy Father's Day	News.SD.gov	6/19/2020
Not on My Watch.	News.SD.gov	6/26/2020
A Historic Day at Mount Rushmore	News.SD.gov	7/10/2020
Our South Dakota Way of Life	News.SD.gov	7/17/2020
South Dakota's Future Remains Bright	News.SD.gov	7/24/2020
Gov. Noem Rebukes SCOTUS' Failure to Protect People's First Amendment Right to Worship	News.SD.gov	7/27/2020
Gov. Kristi Noem: Science Shows Not Going To School Hurts Kids Much Worse Than COVID	The Federalist	7/30/2020
Getting Our Kids Back to School	News.SD.gov	7/31/2020
An Optimistic Outlook	News.SD.gov	8/7/2020
Rich States, Poor States: ALEC-Laffer State Economic Competitiveness Index (Foreword by Kristi Noem)	American Legal Exchange Council	8/12/2020
Parents Agree: Let's Get Our Kids Back to School	News.SD.gov	8/14/2020
By the Numbers: South Dakota's COVID-19 Response	News.SD.gov	8/21/2020

The Duty of Leaders	News.SD.gov	8/28/2020
The Consequences of Lockdowns	News.SD.gov	9/3/2020
Celebrating and Commemorating	News.SD.gov	9/11/2020
Good News for Ethanol	News.SD.gov	9/18/2020
Reaching Out to Our Neighbors	News.SD.gov	9/25/2020
A South Dakota Staple: The Buffalo Roundup	News.SD.gov	10/2/2020
An Update on South Dakota's COVID-19 Response	News.SD.gov	10/9/2020
More Hunting	News.SD.gov	10/16/2020
Trio of governors: Judge Amy Coney Barrett an inspirational pick for U.S. Supreme Court	Montgomery Advertiser	10/20/2020
Election Day and the Consent of the Governed	News.SD.gov	10/23/2020
Respecting (and Recruiting) Law Enforcement	News.SD.gov	10/30/2020
A Special Thanks to All Our Veterans	News.SD.gov	11/6/2020
Providing for Our Communities	News.SD.gov	11/13/2020
Thanksgiving and Personal Responsibility	News.SD.gov	11/20/2020
Taking inspiration from the women who secured our right to vote	News.SD.gov	12/4/2020
South Dakota's Balanced Covid Response	Wall Street Journal	12/7/2020
Investing in South Dakota's Future	News.SD.gov	12/11/2020
The Christmas Tree's Promise	News.SD.gov	12/18/2020
Challenges and Opportunities: A Look Back on 2020	News.SD.gov	12/23/2020
Protecting and Preserving South Dakota's Agriculture and Natural Resources	News.SD.gov	1/4/2021
Civic Education for the Next Generation	News.SD.gov	1/15/2021
Flexibility and Innovation in Healthcare	News.SD.gov	1/22/2021
Life and Down Syndrome	News.SD.gov	1/29/2021
The Sad Story of Keystone XL	News.SD.gov	2/5/2021
Safe and Effective Medicinal Marijuana	News.SD.gov	2/12/2021
Empowering Parents	News.SD.gov	2/19/2021
Celebrating America	News.SD.gov	2/26/2021
Words and Action	News.SD.gov	3/5/2021
Wrapping up a Great Legislative Session	News.SD.gov	3/12/2021
An Endowment for Our Future	News.SD.gov	3/19/2021
Fairness in Women's Sports	News.SD.gov	3/26/2021
Taxation without infrastructure	News.SD.gov	4/2/2021

Why South Dakota is coming out of the coronavirus crisis so strong	Washington Examiner	4/6/2021
Infringed.	News.SD.gov	4/9/2021
A Safer South Dakota	News.SD.gov	4/16/2021
Joe Biden's First 100 Days – Disunity and Partisanship	News.SD.gov	4/23/2021
The Power of Travel	News.SD.gov	4/30/2021
Strengthening South Dakota's Workforce	News.SD.gov	5/7/2021
Stronger Families Together	News.SD.gov	5/14/2021
Triumphs and Mistakes: Learning from Our History	News.SD.gov	5/21/2021
Remembering the Brave	News.SD.gov	5/28/2021
Arbitrary and Unlawful	News.SD.gov	6/4/2021
South Dakota Strong	News.SD.gov	6/11/2021
Happy Father's Day to Our Founding Fathers	News.SD.gov	6/18/2021
Biden's Backdoor Death Tax	News.SD.gov	6/25/2021
Independence	News.SD.gov	7/2/2021
Where's the Beef?	News.SD.gov	7/9/2021
Learning from Our Mistakes	News.SD.gov	7/16/2021
Great Places	News.SD.gov	7/23/2021
A Border in Crisis Needs Solutions and Action	News.SD.gov	8/1/2021
Back-to-School for students, teachers, and parents	News.SD.gov	8/6/2021
They Come to Sturgis (and South Dakota) for Freedom	News.SD.gov	8/13/2021
South Dakota is a Rising Star as a Recovery Leader	News.SD.gov	8/20/2021
Conservative Principles Restrain Government, Not Expand Its Powers	News.SD.gov	8/27/2021
9/11 anniversary and the lesson every generation must learn	News.SD.gov	9/10/2021
A responsibility to be smart with taxpayer dollars	News.SD.gov	9/17/2021
Gov. Kristi Noem: If President Biden mandates vaccines, South Dakota will see him in court	USA Today	9/21/2021
By God and Granite: Mount Rushmore, Our Founders, and the Defense of American Greatness	HarperCollins	9/28/2021
Buffalo Roundup is a one-of-a-kind experience	News.SD.gov	9/29/2021
Pheasant hunting is a tradition worth preserving	News.SD.gov	10/1/2021
Don't wait till Monday to celebrate Native American heritage	News.SD.gov	10/8/2021
South Dakota's Treats this Halloween Season	News.SD.gov	10/29/2021
Highlighting our best and brightest this Veterans Day	News.SD.gov	11/5/2021
A little goes a long way during this Season of Giving	News.SD.gov	11/12/2021

Under God, the People Gather and Give Thanks	News.SD.gov	11/19/2021
Caught in a Self-Inflicted Energy Crisis	News.SD.gov	12/3/2021
Budgeting for the future	News.SD.gov	12/10/2021
That won't happen here	News.SD.gov	12/17/2021
God bless the 235th MPC	News.SD.gov	1/8/2022
New year, no fear	Black Hills Pioneer	1/8/2022
Fairness in Girls' Sports Matters	News.SD.gov	1/14/2022
In South Dakota, we protect life	News.SD.gov	1/21/2022
Why Putting America First Matters to South Dakota	News.SD.gov	1/28/2022
Teach Our Children to be United	News.SD.gov	2/4/2022
Mandate Freedom	News.SD.gov	2/11/2022
Better off, but for how long?	Black Hills Pioneer	2/19/2022
The Home Stretch	News.SD.gov	2/25/2022
Two Years Later…	News.SD.gov	3/4/2022
South Dakota: The State for Business	News.SD.gov	3/11/2022
The Hope of Springtime	News.SD.gov	3/18/2022
Taking Care of People	News.SD.gov	3/25/2022
Serving Veterans, Supporting Soldiers	News.SD.gov	4/1/2022
The Lessons of History	News.SD.gov	4/8/2022
The Week to Celebrate Life	News.SD.gov	4/14/2022
Opportunity, Not Difficulty	News.SD.gov	4/22/2022
Go Big, Go South Dakota Tourism	News.SD.gov	4/29/2022
South Dakota Loves the Outdoors	News.SD.gov	5/6/2022
South Dakota Strong	News.SD.gov	5/13/2022
South Dakota is a 2nd Amendment Sanctuary	News.SD.gov	5/20/2022
Their Sacrifice is a Call for Us to Serve	News.SD.gov	5/27/2022
What Happened to America?	News.SD.gov	6/3/2022
Old Glory, Eternal Glory	News.SD.gov	6/10/2022
Governor Kristi Noem: Helping Moms and Babies	News.SD.gov	6/24/2022
Not My First Rodeo: Lessons from the Heartland	Grand Central Publishing	6/28/2022
Governor Kristi Noem: Land of the Free Because of the Brave	News.SD.gov	7/1/2022
Governor Kristi Noem: Building Stronger Families Together	News.SD.gov	7/8/2022

Governor Kristi Noem: Visiting Mothers and Their Newborn Children in Our State Prisons: Hope for the	News.SD.gov	7/15/2022
Governor Kristi Noem: Cautiously Optimistic: South Dakota's Finances and the Future	News.SD.gov	7/22/2022
Gov. Noem and Republican Governors Call on President Biden to Defend Equal Opportunities for Girls a	News.SD.gov	7/27/2022
Governor Kristi Noem: 50 Years of Title IX	News.SD.gov	7/29/2022
Gov. Kristi Noem: Starting the Conversation	News.SD.gov	8/5/2022
Gov. Kristi Noem: Fast Bikes, Fresh Air, & Freedom	News.SD.gov	8/12/2022
Gov. Kristi Noem: Raising the Bar	News.SD.gov	8/19/2022
Governor Kristi Noem: Public Safety Impacts All of Us	News.SD.gov	8/26/2022
Governor Kristi Noem: Celebrating Hard Work	News.SD.gov	9/2/2022
Governor Kristi Noem: Defending Our Constitution	News.SD.gov	9/9/2022
Governor Kristi Noem: The Best State In the Country to Do Business	News.SD.gov	9/16/2022
Governor Kristi Noem: Our Rural Way of Life	News.SD.gov	9/23/2022
Governor Kristi Noem: Saving South Dakota Families	News.SD.gov	9/30/2022
Governor Kristi Noem: Breaking Tourism Records	News.SD.gov	10/7/2022
Governor Kristi Noem: A Tradition for the Next Generation	News.SD.gov	10/14/2022
Governor Kristi Noem: Economic Growth the South Dakota Way	News.SD.gov	10/21/2022
Governor Kristi Noem: Stronger Families – Stronger Communities	News.SD.gov	10/28/2022
Governor Kristi Noem: Building the Strongest Economy in America	News.SD.gov	11/4/2022
Governor Kristi Noem: Veterans are Heroes	News.SD.gov	11/11/2022
Thanksgiving – A Time for Family & Fellowship	News.SD.gov	11/18/2022
Thanking Emergency Responders	News.SD.gov	11/28/2022
Fiscal Responsibility the South Dakota Way	News.SD.gov	12/2/2022
South Dakota Bans TikTok	Wall Street Journal	12/5/2022
The Right Tax Cut – The Right Time	News.SD.gov	12/9/2022
Curtailing China	News.SD.gov	12/16/2022
I heard the bells	Black Hills Pioneer	12/24/2022
Always Ready, Always There	News.SD.gov	12/30/2022
New Year, New Growth	News.SD.gov	1/6/2023
Building the American Dream	News.SD.gov	1/13/2023
Champions at the Capitol	News.SD.gov	1/20/2023

Strengthening South Dakota Families	News.SD.gov	1/27/2023
Securing South Dakota Agriculture	News.SD.gov	2/3/2023
Empowering Families – Prioritizing Students	News.SD.gov	2/10/2023
South Dakota's Blueprint to Fight Communist China	News.SD.gov	2/17/2023
Mount Rushmore: Preserving Freedom in America	News.SD.gov	2/24/2023
Hard Work	News.SD.gov	3/3/2023
For the People	News.SD.gov	3/10/2023
Preserving Agriculture, Preserving Patriotism	News.SD.gov	3/17/2023
Giving Back – Permanently	News.SD.gov	3/24/2023
Making the Best State in the Nation Even Better	News.SD.gov	3/31/2023
The Spirit of Easter	News.SD.gov	4/7/2023
Freedom, Guaranteed	News.SD.gov	4/14/2023
A History Worth Learning	News.SD.gov	4/21/2023
Building a Winning Workforce	News.SD.gov	4/28/2023
Travel Forward – Celebrating National Travel and Tourism Week	News.SD.gov	5/5/2023
Cherishing South Dakota Moms	News.SD.gov	5/12/2023
Remembering Sheila	News.SD.gov	5/19/2023
Improving Higher Education	News.SD.gov	5/26/2023
Grit and Grind: Building South Dakota for the Next Generation	News.SD.gov	6/2/2023
South Dakota: America's Freedom Stronghold	News.SD.gov	6/9/2023
Freedom Works Here	News.SD.gov	6/23/2023
Too Great a Nation	News.SD.gov	6/30/2023
America: A Year-Round Celebration	News.SD.gov	7/7/2023
Too Close to Home: Combating the Prescription Drug Shortage	News.SD.gov	7/14/2023
South Dakota Dreams: A "Freedom Works Here" Story	News.SD.gov	7/21/2023
Telling a Story of Hope	News.SD.gov	7/28/2023
Sturgis: The Fastest and Freest	News.SD.gov	8/4/2023
The Unsung Heroes of Sturgis	News.SD.gov	8/11/2023
A Note to Self: Called to Love	News.SD.gov	8/18/2023
The World's Best Hope	News.SD.gov	8/25/2023
The Fight for Our Country	News.SD.gov	9/1/2023
Freedom Really Does Work Here	News.SD.gov	9/8/2023

Shall Not be Infringed	News.SD.gov	9/15/2023
Cybersecurity: South Dakota's Next Big Industry	News.SD.gov	9/22/2023
The Buffalo Roundup: The Heart of the Wild West	News.SD.gov	9/29/2023
Welcoming Home South Dakota's Finest	News.SD.gov	10/6/2023
Protecting the Promised Land	News.SD.gov	10/13/2023
Birds of a Feather	News.SD.gov	10/20/2023
Noem: Load up, have fun in pheasant season	Madison Daily Leader	10/20/2023
Buckle Down and Budget: Looking Forward to Legislative Session	News.SD.gov	10/27/2023
Know Where You Stand: The Fight for Fairness in Girls' Sports	News.SD.gov	11/3/2023
Thank You is Never Enough: Honoring Our Veterans	News.SD.gov	11/10/2023
Giving Thanks	News.SD.gov	11/17/2023
Freedom Works Here – Round Two	News.SD.gov	11/24/2023
Securing America: The Fight Against Communist China	News.SD.gov	12/1/2023
Let's Talk about the "Big Three"	News.SD.gov	12/8/2023
Shining a Light	News.SD.gov	12/15/2023
The Greatest Gift	News.SD.gov	12/22/2023
Ringing in the New Year, Letting Freedom Ring	News.SD.gov	12/29/2023
"Under God, the People Rule"	News.SD.gov	1/5/2024
Freedom for Life: Why a Crying Baby is a Good Thing	News.SD.gov	1/12/2024
Freedom to Be Healthy: A Story of Heroism	News.SD.gov	1/19/2024
Keeping and Bearing Arms for Generations	News.SD.gov	1/26/2024
Matters of State: Why the Invasion at the Southern Border is a Threat to States' Rights	News.SD.gov	2/2/2024
Supporting Second Chances	News.SD.gov	2/9/2024
The Freedom to Work	News.SD.gov	2/16/2024
The Freedom to Be Secure – and How to Keep it	News.SD.gov	2/23/2024
Preserving Our Outdoor Heritage	News.SD.gov	3/1/2024
Ensuring the Security of God's Chosen People	News.SD.gov	3/8/2024
Looking Back on Legislative Session	News.SD.gov	3/15/2024
Evil Foreign Governments Should Not be our Neighbors	News.SD.gov	3/22/2024
Growing in Faith: Celebrating Easter	News.SD.gov	3/29/2024
Compassionately Communicating Life	RealClear Politics	4/2/2024
Banish the Cartels	News.SD.gov	4/5/2024

I Like My Freedom	News.SD.gov	4/12/2024
Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem	News.SD.gov	4/19/2024
As Dumb as it is Dangerous: Why Dismantling Title IX is an All-Out Assault on Women	News.SD.gov	4/26/2024
Appreciating Teachers	News.SD.gov	5/3/2024
No Going Back: The Truth on What's Wrong with Politics and How We Move America Forward	Center Street	5/7/2024
Celebrating Mothers	News.SD.gov	5/10/2024
Combatting the Cartel Crisis: at Home and at the Border	News.SD.gov	5/17/2024
National Travel and Tourism Week	News.SD.gov	5/24/2024
Tackling the Tribal Public Safety Crisis	News.SD.gov	5/31/2024
How Quick We Are to Forget	News.SD.gov	6/7/2024
Father's Day: Shining a Light on the Fatherless	News.SD.gov	6/14/2024
Peace Through Strength: The Stark Contrast Between Trump and Biden	RealClear Politics	6/16/2024
Keeping South Dakota Ag on Offense	News.SD.gov	6/21/2024
Weathering the Storm – Together	News.SD.gov	6/28/2024
A Celebration of Freedom	News.SD.gov	7/5/2024
Fish Stories	News.SD.gov	7/12/2024
The Favorite of Heaven	News.SD.gov	7/19/2024
The Ringing Bell of Liberty	News.SD.gov	7/26/2024
Let Hogs Run Free	News.SD.gov	8/2/2024
"We Need to Talk"	News.SD.gov	8/9/2024
Build the Wall	News.SD.gov	8/16/2024
South Dakota Sturdy	News.SD.gov	8/23/2024
Fairgoing	News.SD.gov	8/30/2024
Safer Communities	News.SD.gov	9/6/2024
The Basics of Education	News.SD.gov	9/13/2024
Harvesting Our Own Food Supply	News.SD.gov	9/20/2024
Round 'Em Up	News.SD.gov	9/27/2024
Cyber Place	News.SD.gov	10/4/2024
ROOSTER!	News.SD.gov	10/11/2024
South Dakota: Prosperous and Free	News.SD.gov	10/18/2024
Passing Along Freedom	News.SD.gov	10/25/2024
A Prayer for Our Nation	News.SD.gov	11/1/2024

Keeping South Dakota Free	News.SD.gov	11/8/2024
Securing Our Homeland	News.SD.gov	11/15/2024
A Budget for the People	News.SD.gov	12/6/2024
Hunting Traditions Remain Strong in South Dakota	News.SD.gov	12/13/2024

Appendix B

Title/Topic	Place/Audience	Date
Tribal Awards Ceremony	SD Capitol Tribal members	1/14/2020
Governor Noem's State of the State Address	Pierre, SD Legislature	1/14/2020
South Dakota Governor's Conference on Tourism Awards Night Gala	Ramkota Hotel Pierre, SD Tourism industry	1/23/2020
Military Dining Out	Ramkota Hotel Pierre, SD Military community	2/6/2020
Teacher of the Year Luncheon	Governor's Residence Dept. of Education employees, teacher of the year, and legislators	3/4/2020
Republican Jewish Coalition Annual Meeting/Welcome Reception and Shabbat Dinner	The Venetian Palazzo Hotel Las Vegas, NV Republican Jewish Coalition	3/13/2020
South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem Delivers Message of Hope During COVID-19 Pandemic	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	3/25/2020
Gov. Kristi Noem: "If I could legislate human behavior, I wouldn't need a Department of Corrections"	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	4/1/2020
The Role of Government in a Crisis Situation	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	4/1/2020
Gov. Noem Thanks Health Professionals for Public Health Week	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	4/7/2020
Gov. Noem COVID-19 Press Conference 4-7-2020	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	4/7/2020
Gov. Noem Proclaims April 8th a Day of Prayer	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	4/8/2020

#PrayforSD	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	4/8/2020
Gov. Noem COVID-19 Press Conference 4-8-2020	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	4/8/2020
Gov. Noem Full COVID-19 Press Conference 4-10-2020	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	4/10/2020
Gov. Noem COVID 19 Press Conference 4-11-2020	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	4/11/2020
Gov. Noem Announces Statewide Clinical Trial of Hydroxychloroquine	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	4/13/2020
Gov. Noem Addresses the Balance between Fighting COVID-19 and Protecting South Dakota Way of Life	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	4/13/2020
Gov. Noem Responds to Smithfield Situation	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	4/14/2020
Gov. Noem COVID-19 Press Conference 4-14-2020	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	4/14/2020
Gov. Noem COVID-19 Press Conference 4-15-2020	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	4/15/2020
Gov. Noem: South Dakotans are Flattening the Curve	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	4/16/2020
Gov. Noem COVID-19 Press Conference 4-20-2020	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	4/20/2020
Gov. Noem COVID-19 Presser 4-22-2020	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	4/22/2020
Gov. Noem Asks Feds for Flexibility to Defeat COVID-19	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	4/23/2020
Gov. Noem to Farmers: "You do not have to go through this alone."	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	4/23/2020
Gov. Noem Thanks Incredible OB-GYN	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	4/23/2020

Gov. Noem Full COVID-19 Press Conference 4-23-2020	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	4/23/2020
Gov. Noem COVID-19 Press Conference 4-27-2020	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	4/27/2020
Gov. Noem "Back to Normal" Press Conference 4-28-2020	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	4/28/2020
Gov. Noem Unveils "Back to Normal" Plan	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	4/28/2020
Gov. Noem COVID-19 Press Conference 4-30-2020	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	4/30/2020
Gov. Noem: "Hard to Believe People Want to Get Political in the Middle of a Pandemic."	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	5/1/2020
Gov. Noem COVID-19 Press Conference 5-1-2020	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	5/1/2020
Gov. Noem COVID-19 Press Conference 5-4-2020	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	5/4/2020
Gov. Noem COVID-19 Press Conference 5-5-2020	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	5/5/2020
Gov. Noem COVID-19 Press Conference 5-6-2020	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	5/6/2020
Gov. Noem COVID-19 Press Conference 5-7-2020	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	5/7/2020
Gov. Noem COVID-19 Press Conference 5-11-2020	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	5/11/2020
Gov. Noem COVID-19 Press Conference 5-12-20	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	5/12/2020
Gov. Noem COVID-19 Press Conference 5-14-2020	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	5/14/2020
Gov. Noem COVID-19 Press Conference 5-19-2020	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	5/19/2020
Gov. Noem COVID-19 Press Conference 5-20-20	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	5/20/2020

Gov. Noem Gives Update on Tribal Checkpoints Situation	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	5/20/2020
Gov. Noem COVID-19 Press Conference	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	5/21/2020
Gov. Noem COVID-19 Press Conference 5-26-2020	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	5/26/2020
Gov. Noem Gives Update on National Guard in Sioux Falls	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	6/1/2020
Gov. Noem Press Conference on Protests 06-03-2020	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	6/3/2020
Gov. Noem: "Violence is Never the Answer."	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	6/3/2020
Gov. Noem #RushmoreFireworks Press Conference 6-4-2020	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	6/4/2020
Gov. Noem: #RushmoreFireworks will Be Spectacular	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	6/4/2020
Gov. Noem: Lessons Learned from COVID-19	Virtual address South Dakota Residents	6/8/2020
Gov. Kristi Noem's Speech at Mount Rushmore 7-3-2020	Mt. Rushmore, SD Mount Rushmore 4th of July Celebration Attendees	7/3/2020
South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem Speech at RNC 2020	Charlotte, NC RNC Attendees	8/26/2020
196th MEB / 115th Signal Co. Activation Ceremony	Sioux Falls Arena, Sioux Falls, SD Soldiers and their family	8/28/2020
Sioux Falls Downtown Rotary Club Meeting	Washington Pavilion Sioux Falls, SD Rotary members, business leaders, and local officials	8/31/2020
Pottawattamie County, IA Lincoln Day Dinner	Pottawattamie County, Iowa Pottawattamie County GOP	9/4/2020
Prairie Lakes Healthcare Center for Learning Ribbon Cutting	Prairie Lakes Healthcare Center for Learning	9/14/2020

	Watertown, SD Lake Area Tech members and community members	
LATC Governor's Luncheon	LATC Student Center Watertown, SD Funders, industry partners, and educators	9/14/2020
DHS Governor's Awards	Capitol Pierre, SD DHS employees, awardees, and family	9/15/2020
Hillsdale College National Leadership Seminar	Rushmore Plaza Civic Center Rapid City, SD Hillsdale College National Leadership	9/20/2020
Washington County, OR Lincoln Day Dinner	Washington County, OR Washington County GOP	9/26/2020
Governor Noem Address to 2020 Special Legislative Session on COVID-19 Relief Dollars	Pierre, SD Legislature	10/5/2020
3M Ribbon Cutting	3M Facility, Aberdeen, SD 3M board members, federal delegation, and local officials.	11/6/2020
Fallen Heroes Bridge Dedication	Parkston High School Parkston, SD Dept. of Veterans Affairs employees, veterans and affairs.	11/11/2020
Gov. Noem's Press Conference 11-18-2020	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	11/18/2020
Governor's Tree Lighting Ceremony	Capitol, Pierre, SD Community members	11/24/2020
Budget Address	Capitol, Pierre, SD Legislators, state officials, and community members	12/8/2020
Governor Kristi Noem's 2020 Budget Address	Pierre, SD Legislature	12/8/2020
Huron Event	State Fair Complex Huron, SD Ag Committee legislators, local legislators and elected officials, and leaders of local chambers, ag associations, ag banks, state fair sponsors	12/9/2020

Ellsworth Announcement	Ellsworth AFB, Rapid City, SD Airmen, local officials, families, and community members.	12/9/2020
DNG Challenge Coin Recognition- Rapid City	Rapid City Airport- National Guard Hangar Rapid City, SD National Guard Soldiers	12/9/2020
SDNG Challenge Coin Recognition- Sioux Falls	Sioux Falls Airport – SDNG Readiness Center Sioux Falls, SD National Guard Soldiers	12/9/2020
Turning Point Student Action Summit 2020	West Palm Beach, FL	12/19/2020
Georgia Senate Runoff	Valdosta, GA	12/30/2020
PREMIER Scholarship Fund Announcement	The Hub Auditorium Sioux Falls, SD Local business leaders, elected officials	1/6/2021
Republican National Committee	Amelia Island, FL	1/7/2021
Gov. Kristi Noem's 2021 State of the State Address	Capitol, Pierre, SD Citizens of SD	1/12/2021
Gov. Noem Press Conference 1-21-2021	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	1/21/2021
Gov. Noem Press Conference 1-28-2021	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	1/28/2021
SDNG Military Dining Out	Ramkota, Pierre, SD SD National Guard and family	2/4/2021
Gov. Noem Press Conference 2-11-2021	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	2/11/2021
Gov. Noem Legislative Press Conference 2-18-2021	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	2/18/2021
Organizing Convention California Republican Party	Virtual	2/19/2021
Governor Kristi Noem (R-SD) Full Speech at CPAC 2021 in Orlando, FL 2/27/21	Orlando, FL CPAC Attendees	2/27/2021

Republican Party of Minnesota	Intercontinental MSP Minneapolis, MN	3/12/2021
Freedom Scholarship Bill Signing – SB 171	First PREMIER Bank Sioux Falls, SD Elected officials and business leaders	3/18/2021
Pierre – Ft. Pierre Bridge Project Groundbreaking	Pierre Bridge Pierre, SD Local officials, federal delegation, and community members	3/29/2021
Harris County, TX Lincoln Day Dinner	Bayou City Event Center Houston, TX	4/3/2021
Conservative Partnership Institute Luncheon Panel	Mar-a-Lago Palm Beach, FL	4/7/2021
KIOGA Mid-Year Annual Conference	Kansas Independent Oil & Gas Association Garden City, KS	4/13/2021
South Dakota National Guard Officers Association State Conference	Watertown Events Center Watertown, SD Sd National Guard, local officials, and community members	4/14/2021
Kansas Republican Party Convention	Hilton Garden Inn Manhattan, KS	4/24/2021
Young Republicans National Federation	Virtual Meeting	4/29/2021
Lake Area Tech Luncheon	Lake Area Tech Watertown, SD Lake Area Tech board members, business leaders, and elected officials.	5/10/2021
New Mexico GOP Convention	Amarillo Embassy Suites Amarillo, TX	5/14/2021
Round Dance	Capitol Pierre, SD Tribal Chairmen, community members, elected officials	5/20/2021

Republican Governors Association Executive Roundtable Dinner	JW Marriott Nashville, TN	5/26/2021
Arkansas GOP Reagan-Rockefeller Day Dinner	Benton, AR	6/4/2021
Governor Kristi Noem Speaks at North Carolina Republican Convention	Greenville, NC North Carolina Republican Convention Attendees	6/5/2021
State Fire School Drop-In	Stanley County High School Fort Pierre, SD Dept. of Public Safety employees and firefighters	6/11/2021
Cattlemen's Prime Time Gala	Sioux Falls Convention Center Sioux Falls, SD Cattlemen members	6/19/2021
Welcoming Remarks at 102nd Annual State Convention South Dakota American Legion	Huron Event Center Huron, SD American legion members, community members, federal delegation, local officials	6/27/2021
96th MEB Returning to SD from Deployment – Deactivation Ceremony	Augustana University Sioux Falls, SD National Guardsmen and their families, federal delegation, and local officials.	7/1/2021
Governor's Ag Summit	The District, Sioux Falls, SD Ag groups, DANR + GFP employees	7/9/2021
South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem Speaks at Conservative Political Action Conference	Dallas, TX CPAC Attendees	7/11/2021
Tri-State Governor's Conference	South Sioux City Marriott Riverfront, Sioux City, SD South Dakota, Nebraska, and Iowa governors along with staff, business leaders, and local officials	7/12/2021
Midwestern Legislative Conference	The Monument Rapid City, SD Midwestern Legislative Conference members, legislators, staff, other state officials, and private sector representatives	7/13/2021
Iowa Family Leader Summit	Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center Des Moines, IA	7/16/2021

RGA Greg Gianforte Reception	Bozeman, MT	7/17/2021
SDIAAA Annual Conference	The Lodge of Deadwood Deadwood, SD High school athletic administrators and families	7/20/2021
Freedom Fest	Rushmore Plaza Civic Center Rapid City, SD	7/21/2021
Southern Border Visit with SD National Guard	Texas South Dakota National Guard Soldiers	7/26/2021
ACE Scholarships	Four Seasons Hotel Jackson Hole, WY	8/7/2021
Sturgis Buffalo Chip Auction / Legends Ride	Deadwood, SD Buffalo Chip members, community members	8/9/2021
Jeff Duncan BBQ	Anderson Sports & Entertainment Center Anderson, SC	8/23/2021
Mid-States Organized Crime Information Center Annual Conference	The Lodge at Deadwood Deadwood, SD Law Enforcement	9/1/2021
State Fair & Bull Bash	SD State Fair, Huron, SD Ag community	9/2/2021
NRA Women's Leadership Video	Virtual	9/2/2021
SD Land and Lending Conference	Denny Sanford Premier Center Sioux Falls, SD brokers, lenders, appraisers, abstractors	9/10/2021
Becoming an Outdoors Woman	Outlaw Ranch Custer, SD Woman Outdoorsman	9/10/2021
Raven Precision Ag Center Ribbon Cutting	Raven Precision Ag Building Brookings, SD SDSU Board Members and community members	9/11/2021
114th Welcome Home Ceremony	Hangar 40, Joe Foss Field, Sioux Falls, SD National Guardsmen, federal delegation, and local officials	9/11/2021

South Dakota Veterans Cemetery 20th Anniversary 9/11 Ceremony	SD Veterans Cemetery Sioux Falls, SD Dept. of Veterans Affairs secretary and staff	9/11/2021
153rd SD National Guard Welcome Home from Texas	Huron, SD National Guardsmen, their families, and other elected officials	9/13/2021
Delaware County, OH Lincoln Day Dinner	Westerville, OH	9/30/2021
South Dakota Right to Life Annual Convention	Sioux Falls First Church Sioux Falls, SD Right to Life members, community members, and local officials	10/2/2021
1742nd Transportation Company Activation Ceremony	University of Sioux Falls Sioux Falls, SD National Guardsmen, their families, local officials, and community members	10/3/2021
Governor's Awards for Disability	Capital, Pierre, SD Department of Human Services employees and families	10/5/2021
Bridge Dedication Ceremony – U.S. Army Air Corps CPT Elmer Rusch	SDSU Campus Brookings, SD Dept. of Military individuals and families	10/8/2021
Florida Right to Life Convention	Orlando, FL	10/14/2021
South Dakota Risk and Safety Conference	Ramkota Hotel Pierre, SD State, county, city, and school employees	11/3/2021
Law Enforcement Appreciation Dinner	Ramkota Inn Sioux Falls, SD Pete Hegseth – Keynote speaker Law enforcement, families, and community members	11/10/2021
Sioux Falls Veterans Day Ceremony	Military Heritage Alliance, Sioux Falls, SD DVA employees, elected local officials	11/11/2021
Turner County, SD Lincoln Day Dinner	Viborg, Sd	11/17/2021
Brookings County, SD Republican Meeting	Brookings Outdoor Adventure Center, Brookings, SD	11/20/2021

Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association Breakfast	South Point Hotel Las Vegas, NV	12/1/2021
Miss Rodeo Pageant Luncheon	South Point Hotel Las Vegas, NV	12/2/2021
American Legislative Exchange Council States and Nation Policy Summit	The Manchester Grand Hyatt San Diego, CA	12/3/2021
Budget Address	Capital, Pierre, SD South Dakotans	12/7/2021
Gov. Noem's 2021 Budget Address	Pierre, SD Legislature	12/8/2021
National Guard Deployment - 235th Military Police Activation	The Monument's Fine Arts Theatre Rapid City, SD National Guardsmen and their families, local and state officials	1/5/2022
South Dakota Municipal League Meeting	South Dakota Municipal League Office Fort Pierre, SD Mayors and other city officials	1/6/2022
Lemon Town Hall	Lemon, SD Community Members	1/7/2022
South Dakota Quarter Horse Association Banquet	Ramkota Hotel Pierre, SD Ag Community	1/8/2022
POW/MIA Chair Dedication	Capital Pierre, SD DVA and the community	1/10/2022
Gov. Kristi Noem 2022 State of the State	Pierre, SD Legislature	1/11/2022
South Dakota Rural Electrical Association	Ramkota hotel Pierre, SD rural electric coop employees, directors and families	1/14/2022
South Dakota Tourism Conference	Ramkota Hotel Pierre, SD Tourism state employees	1/19/2022
National Shooting Sports Foundation Governor's Roundtable	Las Vegas, NV	1/19/2022

National Shooting Sports Foundation RGA Meeting	Vegas Strip Gun Club Las Vegas, NV	1/19/2022
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation Shot Show Reception	The Venetian Las Vegas, NV	1/19/2022
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation Hunters Thanking the Industry	Mandalay Bay Convention Center Las Vegas, NV	1/20/2022
Safari Club International Night of the Hunter	Mandalay Bay Convention Center Las Vegas, NV	1/20/2022
Safari Club International Stables Event	Mandalay Bay Convention Center Las Vegas, NV	1/21/2022
South Dakota Corn Growers Association Conference	Sioux Falls Convention Center Sioux Falls, SD SD Corn Growers Association members and other ag members	1/22/2022
SD Right to Life 49th Hour of Reflection "The Sanctity of Human Life"	Capitol Pierre, SD Right to Life Members	1/30/2022
Senate State Affairs DSU Testimony	Capitol Pierre, SD Senate State Affairs Committee	2/2/2022
Gov. Noem Holds Press Conference after Signing Fairness in Girls' Sports Legislation 2-3-22	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	2/3/2022
2022 SDNG Military Dining Out	Ramkota Pierre, SD SD National Guard and families	2/3/2022
Leadership South Dakota – National Guard	South Dakota National Guard Museum Pierre, SD National Guard Leadership Class	2/3/2022
Gov. Noem Weekly Legislative Press Conference 2-10-22	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	2/10/2022
Gov. Noem Gives Legislative Update 2-17-2022	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	2/17/2022
South Dakota Highway Patrol Graduation	Capitol	2/18/2022

	Pierre, SD Highway Patrol Grads and families	
Teton Valley, WY GOP Lincoln Day Dinner	The Four Seasons Teton Village, WY	2/18/2022
Hughes County, SD Lincoln Day Dinner	Ramkota, Pierre, SD	2/23/2022
Conservative Political Action Conference 2022	National Harbor, MD	2/25/2022
Gov. Kristi Noem Speaks at CPAC 2022	Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center National Harbor, MD CPAC Attendees	2/26/2022
New York GOP Convention	The Milleridge Inn Jericho, NY	2/28/2022
Gov. Noem Hammers Media over False Critical Race Theory Coverage	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	3/3/2022
Utah Federation of Republican Women	TribeHouse Pleasant Grove, UT	3/4/2022
Delegate Speaker Series	Jeanne Wagner Theater Salt Lake City, UT	3/4/2022
Bill Signing of SB-122; prohibiting Zuckerbucks from elections	Capitol Rotunda Pierre, SD Legislators and community members	3/16/2022
Wings of Valor "Salute to Our Heroes" Military Gala	Military Heritage Alliance Center Sioux Falls, SD Wings of Valor members, veterans, and community members	3/24/2022
Bill Signing of SB 54 and SB 130: DSU Cyber Program Bills	First Premier Bank Sioux Falls, SD Dakota State University faculty, local elected officials	3/24/2022

Southeast Technical College Event – Healthcare Simulation Center	Southeast Technical College Sioux Falls, SD Sioux Falls business leaders and elected officials	3/25/2022
Mobridge Town Hall	Wrangler Motor Inn Mobridge, SD Community Members	4/4/2022
Onstage at the Reagan Library with Governor Kristi Noem	Ronald Reagan Presidential Library & Museum Ventura County, California A Time for Choosing Attendees	4/6/2022
GOED Annual Conference	Sioux Falls Convention Center Sioux Falls, SD Economic Development community members	4/14/2022
Police Chiefs & Sheriffs Association Statewide Meeting	The Lodge at Deadwood Deadwood, SD South Dakota Police Chiefs & Sheriffs Association and their families	4/20/2022
Republican Governors Association Oklahoma Event	Colcord Hotel Oklahoma City, OK	4/25/2022
Hays County, TX Lincoln Day Dinner	Embassy Suites San Marcos, TX	4/25/2022
ATF National Canine Certification	Deadwood Mountain Grand Deadwood, SD Handlers, ATF staff, and community members.	4/28/2022
Alpha Center Descendants Dinner	Sioux Falls Convention Center Sioux Falls, SD Legislators, right for life members, and community members.	4/29/2022
Virginia GOP Dinner	Hilton Washington-Dulles Hotel	4/30/2022
Lake Area Technical College Governor's Luncheon	Lake Area Technical College Watertown, SD Technical College members	5/6/2022
Codington County, SD Lincoln Day Dinner	Watertown Convention Center Watertown, SD	5/6/2022

South Dakota Homeschool Conference	Sioux Falls Convention Center Sioux Falls, SD	5/7/2022
Beadle County, SD Lincoln Day Dinner	Huron Event Center Huron, SD	5/9/2022
ASBSD Academic Excellence Luncheon	Ramkota, Pierre, SD Students, educators, and tribal members	5/9/2022
South Dakota Law Enforcement Memorial Service	Lutheran Memorial Church Pierre, SD Law enforcement, families, and community members	5/11/2022
South Dakota National Guard Joint Ceremony: 641st Aviation Welcome Home &129th MPAD Activation Ceremony	Army Aviation Support Facility Rapid City, SD National Guardsmen and their families, federal delegation and local officials	5/14/2022
Pennington County, SD Lincoln Day Dinner	Ramkota Rapid City, SD	5/14/2022
Grant County, SD Lincoln Day Dinner	Speedway Bar and Grill Milbank, SD	5/19/2022
Valley Queen Cheese Groundbreaking Ceremony	Valley Queen Cheese Milbank, SD Board members, local business leaders, and elected officials	5/19/2022
Milbank Town Hall	Milbank, SD Millbank community members	5/19/2022
Kristie Noem NRA	George R. Brown Convention Center Houston, TX NRA Event Attendees	5/27/2022
Black Hills National Cemetery Memorial Day Program	Black Hills National Cemetery Sturgis, SD Community Members and members of federal delegation	5/30/2022
South Dakota Boys State Governor's Banquet	Northern State University Aberdeen, SD Boys State Attendees	6/2/2022
South Dakota Girls State	University of South Dakota Vermillion, SD Girls State Attendees	6/2/2022

2022 SD Primary Election Victory Party	Hilton Garden Inn Sioux Falls, SD	6/7/2022
Los Angeles GOP Flag Day Dinner	The Westin Anaheim, CA	6/10/2022
San Diego, CA GOP Lincoln-Reagan Dinner	Marriot Marquis San Diego, CA	6/11/2022
103rd South Dakota American Legion & 101st American Legion Auxiliary Convention	Watertown Convention Center Watertown, SD American Legion members, elected officials, and other community members	6/19/2022
South Dakota Youth Trooper Academy	George S. Mickelson Criminal Justice Center Pierre, SD Highway Patrol and other local law enforcement	6/22/2022
Governor's Ag Summit	South Dakota State University Brookings, SD Ag community members and other business leaders	6/22/2022
South Dakota GOP Convention	Watertown Convention Center Watertown, SD	6/24/2022
Lt. Gov. Nominating Speech at GOP Convention	Watertown Convention Center Watertown, SD	6/25/2022
Black Hills Roundup Rodeo	Black Hills Roundup Rodeo Grounds Belle Fourche, SD	7/3/2022
Hoover Institution	Stanford University Stanford, CA	7/12/2022
Fallen Hero Bridge Naming PFC David Gatton	Capitol Lake Visitor Center Pierre, SD DVA and local officials	7/16/2022
Heartland Summer Conference	Heartland, Madison, SD SD legislators, mayors, and economic development officials	7/26/2022
The Heritage Foundation	The Heritage Foundation Washington, DC	7/27/2022
Young America's Foundation National Conservative Student Conference	Washington, DC	7/28/2022

Teenage Republican Summer Camp	Camp Rim Rock Rapid City, SD	7/29/2022
Kristi for Governor Spearfish Meet & Greet	Elkhorn Ridge RV Resort Spearfish, SD	7/29/2022
Sturgis Motorcycle Rally Legends Ride Kickoff	Outlaw Square Deadwood, SD	8/8/2022
Diehl for Governor Reception	Norwood, MA	8/10/2022
Alabama GOP Summer Dinner	Renaissance Montgomery Hotel Montgomery, AL	8/12/2022
Basque Fish Fry	Corley Ranch Gardnerville, NV	8/13/2022
DakotaFest Governors Forum	DakotaFest Education Building Michell, SD Agriculture community and stakeholder groups	8/16/2022
Kristi for Governor Redfield, SD Town Hall	Leo's Good Food Redfield, SD	8/19/2022
Hayti Fire Community Day	Hayti Football Field Hayti, SD Firefighters, families, and community members.	8/20/2022
GFP Outdoor Campus 25 Year Celebration	Sioux Falls Outdoor Campus Sioux Falls, SD GFP commissioners, legislators, community members, financial supporters, and GFP staff	8/30/2022
South Dakota State Fair Tuff Hedemann Bull Bash	South Dakota State Fair Huron, SD	9/1/2022
Media Research Center Annual Gala	Virtual	9/21/2022
North Carolina GOP District 10 Above & Beyond Banquet	Virtual	9/22/2022

SD Federation of Republican Women	Virtual	9/22/2022
Grocery Tax Cut Press Conference	Dakota Butcher Rapid City, SD	9/28/2022
National Guard Deployment – 1-112th Aviation Activation	Aviation Readiness Center Rapid City, SD National Guardsmen and their families	10/1/2022
National Guard Groundbreaking – BG Dean Mann Readiness Center	SF National Guard Readiness Center Sioux Falls, SD Federal delegation, DOM + DVA, and other local community leaders.	10/1/2022
Coffee with Gov. Noem and Kari Lake	Jetset Magazine Scottsdale, AZ	10/4/2022
Kristi for Governor Tele-Townhall	Virtual	10/5/2022
Kristi for Governor Tele-Townhall (2)	Virtual	10/9/2022
Women's Hunt at Wings of Valor	Wings of Valor Lodge Parker, SD	10/11/2022
Visit to Sunshine Foods	Sunshine Foods Grocery Store Sioux Falls, SD	10/12/2022
NRCC Tele-Townhall	Virtual	10/15/2022
South Dakota GOP Pheasant Hunt	Wings of Valor Lodge Parker, SD	10/23/2022
Kristi for Governor Salute to Veterans Dinner	Military Heritage Alliance Center Sioux Falls, SD	10/24/2022
Nicolee Ambrose MD 2nd District	Virtual	10/25/2022

Kristi for Governor Brookings, Coffee SD Town Hall	HyVee Brookings, SD	10/25/2022
Kristi for Governor Aberdeen, SD Coffee Town Hall	Kens SuperFoods Aberdeen, SD	10/25/2022
Governor's Awards for Disability	Capitol Pierre, SD Department of Human Services employees	10/26/2022
Kristi for Governor Rapid City, SD Town Hall	Hotel Alex Johnson Rapid City, SD	10/27/2022
Kristi for Governor Chamberlain, SD Town Hall	Main St. Café & Market	10/28/2022
Kristi for Governor Mitchell, SD Town Hall	Marlin's Family Restaurant	10/28/2022
Kristi for Governor Sioux Falls, SD Coffee Town Hall	Zooks Coffee Bar Tea, SD	10/31/2022
Kristi for Governor Tele-Townhall	Virtual	11/1/2022
Kristi for Governor Sioux Falls Rally with Tulsi Gabbard	Military Heritage Alliance Center Sioux Falls, SD	11/2/2022
Kristi for Governor Sioux Falls Rally with Glenn Youngkin	Military Heritage Alliance Center Sioux Falls, SD	11/2/2022
Kristi for Governor RALLY IN RAPID	Barnett Fieldhouse Rapid City, SD	11/7/2022
Kristi for Governor General Election Victory Party	Hilton Garden Inn Sioux Falls, SD	11/8/2022
Law Enforcement Appreciation Dinner	Ramkota Hotel Sioux Falls, SD Law enforcement, federal elected officials, local official, and community members.	11/9/2022
National Guard Welcome Home - 235th Military Police	The Monument's Fine Arts Theatre Rapid City, SD National Guardsmen and families	11/13/2022

Republican Governors Association: The Future of the GOP	Orlando, FL	11/15/2022
The Forum Club of Southwest Florida	Naples Grande Beach Resort Naples, FL	11/18/2022
Budget Address	Capitol, Pierre, SD South Dakota citizens	12/6/2022
National Guard 109th Regional Support Group Activation Ceremony	St. Thomas More High School Rapid City, SD National Guardsmen and their families. Federal delegation and other local officials and community members	12/17/2022
National Guard 109th Regional Support Group TX visit	North Ft. Hood, TX National Guardsmen	12/27/2022
Governor Kristi Noem's Second Inaugural Address		1/7/2023
Joe Circle Bear Recognition	Capitol Pierre, SD Community members	1/10/2023
Governor Kristi Noem 2023 State of the State	Pierre, SD Legislature	1/10/2023
Governor's Tourism Conference Awards Gala	Ramkota Hotel Pierre, SD Tourism industry	1/19/2023
Gov. Noem Holds Press Conference on the Southern Border	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	1/19/2023
Governor Noem's 2022 Budget Address	Pierre, SD Legislature	1/23/2023
Tribal Meth Summit	Mickelson Law Enforcement Building Pierre, SD Law enforcement, tribal members	1/24/2023
Bill Signing Ceremonies – HB1011 & SB41	Governor's Office Pierre, SD Legislators, staff	2/1/2023
Military Dining Out Night	Ramkota Hotel Pierre, SD Law Enforcement, military personnel, and families	2/4/2023

1742nd Transportation Company Welcome Home Ceremony	Denny Sanford Premier Center Pierre, SD Federal and local officials, national guard and their families	2/12/2023
Standing up to the Chinese Communist Party: How to Protect State Sovereignty	Washington, DC America First Policy Institute	2/15/2023
Coolidge Foundation	Library of Congress Washington, DC	2/17/2023
Site Selection Magazine Announcement	Dakota Dunes County Club Dakota Dunes, SD Siouxland Tristate employees, local officials and community members	3/1/2023
Licensure Recognition Bill Signing – SB 76	Midwestern Mechanical Sioux Falls, SD Licensed professionals of Midwestern Mechanical	3/1/2023
Remarks by Governor Kristi Noem at Coolidge and the American Project	Plymouth Notch, Vermont Calvin Cooledge Presidential Foundation	3/9/2023
Ag Preservation Bill Signing; HB 1090	C&B Operations Mitchell, SD Local ag leaders and community	3/16/2023
National Guard Tuition Bill Signing; HB 1039	Range Road Armory Rapid City, SD National Guardsmen	3/16/2023
House Committee on Agriculture RE: The Danger China Poses to American Agriculture	1300 Longworth Washington D.C. Committee Members	3/20/2023
Bill Signing of SB 189; prohibit purchasing agencies from contracting with companies owned or controlled by certain foreign entities or governments.	114th Fighter Wing, Joe Foss Field Sioux Falls, SD Legislators, and local officials	3/22/2023
Bill Signing Reenactment of HB 1175; update references to the Governor, lieutenant governor, and other persons.	Governor's Office Pierre, SD Women staff members, women legislatures	3/27/2023

Children's Home Society of South Dakota Celebration	Children's Home Society of South Dakota Sioux Falls, SD Children's Home Society members, federal delegation member, and local officials	4/12/2023
Governor Kristi Noem Speaks at NRA Leadership Forum	Indianapolis, IN National Rifle Association Institute for Legislative Action Leadership Forum Attendees	4/14/2023
South Dakota Assemblies of God Missions Banquet	Drifters Bar & Grille Pierre, SD South Dakota Assemblies of God Missions congregation	4/24/2023
ASBSD Academic Excellence Luncheon	Ramkota Hotel Pierre, SD Students, school board members, and other community members.	4/24/2023
GOED Spring Conference Luncheon	Sioux Falls Convention Center Sioux Falls. SD Economic development team, local officials, and community members	4/25/2023
FCCLA Conference	Best Western Plus Ramkota Hotel Sioux Falls, SD students, teacher advisors, local officials, and guests	4/25/2023
Apprenticeship Announcement	Howe, Inc. Pierre, SD Howe Inc., members, DLR employees, and local officials	4/25/2023
South Dakota Highway Patrol Award Luncheon	Hilton Garden Inn Downtown Sioux Falls, SD Highway patrol and their families, local officials	5/1/2023
Cultural Heritage Center Groundbreaking Event	Cultural Heritage Center Pierre, SD Legislators, DOE & BHRA staff, and community members	5/2/2023
129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment (MPAD) Welcome Home	Camp Rapid Duke Corning Armory Rapid City, SD All woman soldiers and their family, local officials, and community members	5/5/2023
DOC Women's Prison Graduation	Women's Prison - Training Room Pierre, SD Graduates, visitors, and DOC staff	5/8/2023

White Lake High School Graduation	White Lake High School White Lake, SD Students and their families	5/20/2023
South Dakota Wildland Fire Seasonal Welcome Picnic	Memorial Park Hill City, SD Wildland firefighters and families	5/23/2023
South Dakota Veterans Cemetery Memorial Day Program	South Dakota Veterans Cemetery Sioux Falls, SD Veterans, families, and DVA staff	5/29/2023
State Bridge Naming Ceremony – CPL Kenneth L. DeGroot	CC's Bar & Grill Volga, SD DVA, DOM staff members, community members	5/31/2023
Boys State Governor's Banquet	Northern State University Aberdeen, SD Boys state attendees	6/1/2023
Build Dakota Signing Day	Southeast Technical College Sioux Falls, SD Technical college board members, local business leaders, and graduates	6/2/2023
Second Century Habitat Gala	Sioux Falls Convention Center Sioux Falls, SD Second Century Habitat members and GFP staff and community members	6/3/2023
House Committee - Natural Resources Hearing on BLM Lands Rule	Longworth House Office Building Washington, DC	6/15/2023
Maryland GOP Red, White, and Blue Dinner	BWI Airport Marriott Baltimore, MD	6/17/2023
DSU Army Cyber Signing Ceremony	Beacom Institute of Technology Collaboration Center Madison, SD Federal delegation, DSU president, GOED employee, and community leaders	6/19/2023
US Army SP5 Samuel Jorgensen Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication	Chamberlain Community Center Chamberlain, SD DVA employees, veterans, and local officials	7/7/2023

Republican Governors Association: Conversation with Gov. Noem, Gov. Sanders, and Riley Gaines	St. Regis Aspen, CO	7/25/2023
NASCAR Racecar Unveiling – Freedom Works Here	Falls Park Sioux Falls, SD Local officials and business leaders	7/27/2023
Change of Command Ceremony	The Monument Civic Center Rapid City, SD National Guard members, families, and local officials	8/5/2023
Hard Rock Café "Rocksino" Grand Opening	Outlaw Square Deadwood, SD Tribal leaders, local officials, and Hard Rock executives	8/8/2023
Ag Appreciation Day Luncheon	Sioux Empire Fair – Grandstands Sioux Falls, SD Ag community and local leaders	8/9/2023
Governor Kristi Noem Speaks at Steamboat Institute Conference	Beaver Creek, CO Steamboat Institute's Freedom Conference Attendees	8/26/2023
South Dakota State Fair – DEX Ribbon Cutting	South Dakota State Fair Grounds Huron, SD Ag community and local leaders	8/31/2023
South Dakota Highway Patrol Recruit Graduation	Capitol Pierre, SD Highway Patrol grads and family	9/8/2023
Introduction - Former President Trump Speaks at South Dakota Monumental Leaders Rally	Rapid City, SD Monumental Leaders Rally Attendees	9/8/2023
South Dakota County Convention	Ramkota Hotel Pierre, SD county elected and appointed officials	9/13/2023
Welcome Home Ceremony: 109th Regional Support Group (RSG)	The Monument Rapid City, SD National Guard, their families, and elected officials	9/16/2023
Bill Schuette Barbeque of the Republican Party of Midland County, Michigan	Gerstacker Building at the Midland County Fairgrounds Midland County, Michigan Republican Party of Midland, County	9/18/2023
High Plains Processing Groundbreaking	High Plains Processing Groundbreaking Site	9/19/2023

	Mitchell, SD Economic development employees, and local business leaders	
Global Emerging Technology Summit Panel	The Ritz Carlton – Ballroom Washington D.C. Governor Holcomb (IN) and audience	9/21/2023
Alpha Battery 1st Battalion 147th FIELD ARTILLERY Greeting	South Dakota Army National Guard Readiness Center Watertown, SD National Guard	10/3/2023
South Dakota Kids Belong Gala	Holiday Inn Rapid City Downtown Rapid City, SD SD DSS employees, families, and local officials	10/5/2023
Tri-State Governor's Conference	Hilton Garden Inn Sioux City Riverfront Sioux City, IA Governors of SD, Iowa, and Nebraska	10/11/2023
3M Groundbreaking	3M Brookings, Brookings, SD 3M execs, federal delegation, and local officials	10/13/2023
Bridge Dedication Ceremony – 1LT. Thomas Martin	Military Heritage Alliance Center Sioux Falls, SD	10/14/2023
Jewish Prayer Service	Sioux Falls, SD DVA, DOM employees and family members	10/15/2023
Gallantly Forward Gala, Sergeant Colton Levi Derr Foundation	The Monument Rapid City, SD Levi Derr Foundation members, local officials, business leaders, and community members	10/21/2023
42nd Annual Law Enforcement Dinner	Ramkota Exhibit Hall Rapid City, SD State elected officials, local leaders, and community members	10/25/2023
City of Sioux Falls Public Safety Campus Opening	Sioux Falls Public Safety Campus Sioux Falls, SD Law Enforcement, local officials, and one federal delegation	10/28/2023
Governor's Awards for Disability Employment	Capitol	10/30/2023

	Pierre, SD DSS employees, recipients, and families	
Worldwide Freedom Initiative	Paris, France	11/10/2023
Budget Address	Capital Pierre, SD South Dakota Citizens	12/5/2023
Republican Governors Association: Corporate Chairmans Circle Luncheon	The Venetian Las Vegas, NV	12/7/2023
Gov. Kristi Noem Rally for Donald J. Trump	Sioux City, IA	1/3/2024
State of the State	Capitol Pierre, SD South Dakota Citizens	1/9/2024
Governor's Tourism Conference Gala	Ramkota Hotel Pierre, SD Tourism industry	1/18/2024
Joint Session of SD Legislature	Capitol Pierre, SD South Dakota Citizens	1/31/2024
Military Dining Out Night	Ramkota Hotel Pierre, SD DOM employees, community members, and local officials	2/1/2024
SB 57; create uniform procedures for consideration of criminal histories and convictions in professional or occupational licensure bill signing ceremony	Capitol Pierre, SD Legislators, Jack Brewer, and the DLR team	2/7/2024
Bill Signing Ceremony – SB 78; provide for an E15 fuel tax refund	Governor's Office Pierre, SD Legislatures, POET	2/15/2024
Missouri GOP State Lincoln Days	Kansas City, MO	2/17/2024
Hughes & Stanley County, SD Lincoln Day Dinner	Ramkota, Pierre, SD	2/20/2024

RGA Winter Meeting Executive Roundtable Luncheon	Conrad, Washington, DC	2/22/2024
Conservative Political Action Conference	Gaylord, National Harbor, MD	2/23/2024
Pheasant Fest Ribbon Cutting and Bill Signing Ceremony HB-1119 - Habitat Conservation Plate	Denny Sanford Premier Center Sioux Falls, SD Pheasant Forever members, GFP, and community members	3/1/2024
Bill Signing Ceremony HB-1231 (FOAL)	GOV Mt. Rushmore Room Pierre, SD Ag groups, legislators	3/4/2024
Gov. Noem Bans China and Evil Foreign Governments from Owning SD Ag Land	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	3/4/2024
Bill signing ceremony – HB1076 (Antisemitism)	Rotunda Pierre, SD Legislators, Jewish coalition, and other Jewish influences	3/6/2024
Gov. Noem Signs Historic Bill Combating Antisemitism – HB 1076	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	3/6/2024
Bernie Moreno GOTV Breakfast Rally	Rule 3 Event Center, Pickerington, OH	3/11/2024
Lunch with State Senator Michele Reynolds	Destiny Center, Columbus, OH	3/11/2024
Farmers for Bernie	Ett Farms, Asheville, OH	3/11/2024
Ohio Blockchain Association Fundraiser General Reception	If You Know You Know Club, Columbus, OH	3/11/2024
Mitchell Town Hall & Education Bill Signings (SB 127 and HB 1061)	Mitchell High School Library Mitchell, SD Local educators and legislators	3/13/2024
DSU Quantum Computing Bill Signing (SB45)	Dakota State University Cyber Labs Conference Room Madison, SD DSU Faculty	3/13/2024

Winner Town Hall	Winner Town hall Winner, SD Winner community members	3/13/2024
Spearfish Town Hall	Common Grounds Coffee Shop Spearfish, SD Spearfish community members	3/14/2024
President Donald J. Trump Rally for Bernie Moreno	Wright Bros. Aero Inc. Vandalia, OH	3/16/2024
Change of Command Ceremony - Colonel Casey Collins	Capitol, Pierre, SD DPS employees, honoree and family	3/18/2024
Congressional Testimony on The Danger China Poses to American Agriculture	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture	3/20/2024
Townhall – Mobridge, SD	Great Plains Family Restaurant Mobridge, SD Mobridge community members	3/22/2024
GOED Meet the State	Capitol Visitor Center Pierre, SD State economic leaders	3/26/2024
GOED Conference Awards Luncheon	Denny Sanford Primer Center Sioux Falls, SD Economic development community	4/11/2024
Lake Area Tech Governor's Luncheon	Lake Area Technical College Watertown, SD Educators, community members, and legislators	4/19/2024
Department of Health New Campus Groundbreaking	SD Public Health Laboratory Pierre, SD DOH employees, local officials	4/23/2024
The Villages "No Going Back" Book Event	Rohan RRC, The Villages, FL	5/13/2024
Club 47 "No Going Back" Book Event	Hilton Airport Hotel, West Palm Beach, FL	5/13/2024

Gov. Noem's Press Conference on Cartel Impact on Tribal Reservations and Open Southern Border	Press Conference South Dakota Residents	5/17/2024
NRA Corporate Executives Reception	Omni Dallas, Dallas, TX	5/17/2024
California GOP Convention	DoubleTree by Hilton, Burlingame, CA	5/17/2024
SDWF Seasonal Welcome Picnic	Keystone Community Center Keystone, SD	5/21/2024
Teacher Apprenticeship Graduation	Public Safety, Law enforcement, and family Capitol Pierre, SD	5/21/2024
Cuyahoga County, OH Lincoln Day Dinner	Teachers, families, and DOE Windows on the River, Cleveland, OH	5/22/2024
SD Veterans Cemetery Memorial Day Program	South Dakota Veterans Cemetery Sioux Falls, SD	5/27/2024
Social Studies Summit	Sioux Falls Convention Center Sioux Falls, SD	6/3/2024
78th Annual Girls State	Educators Aalfs Auditorium Vermillion, SD	6/6/2024
Friends of the NRA Lewis & Clark Chapter Banquet	Girls State Attendees NFAA Yankton Archery Center, Yankton, SD	6/7/2024
Wausau, WI Lincoln Day Dinner	Hilton Garden Inn, Wausau, WI	6/8/2024
Governor's Ag Summit	State Fair Grounds Huron, SD	6/12/2024
Independent Living Teen Conference	Ag community Georgia Morse Middle School	6/12/2024

	Pierre, SD DSS Employees	
Turning Point Action: The People's Convention	Huntington Place, Detroit, MI	6/14/2024
Faith & Freedom Coalition Afternoon Remarks	The Westin, Washington, DC	6/22/2024
Faith & Freedom Coalition Gala	The Westin, Washington, DC	6/22/2024
Shelby County, TN Lincoln Day Dinner	Hilton, Memphis, TN	6/23/2024
Republican National Convention	Fiserv Forum, Milwaukee, WI	7/15/2024
Faith & Freedom Coalition Breakfast at the RNC	Pfister Hotel, Milwaukee, WI	7/18/2024
Republican Jewish Coalition Reception at the RNC	The Wisconsin Club, Milwaukee, WI	7/18/2024
Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication	American Legion Post 184 Estelline, SD DVA, retired veterans, and community members	8/2/2024
National Guard 114th Fighter Wing Members Welcome Home	114th Fighter Wing Base Sioux Falls, SD Airmen and their families	8/3/2024
Sturgis Motorcycle Rally Military Appreciation Day	Harley-Davidson Rally Point Sturgis, SD Bikers, veterans, and community members	8/6/2024
Dana J. Dykhouse Business Center & Archway Grand Opening	Lake Area Technical College Watertown, SD Lake Area Tech members and local community business leaders	8/21/2024
Town Hall with Gov. Kristi Noem and Tudor Dixon	Barrister Gardens Banquet Center St. Clair Shores, MI	8/23/2024
Michigan Republican Convention	Dort Financial Center Flint, MI	8/24/2024

Trump Force 47 Georgia	Virtual	8/27/2024
Tribal Law Enforcement Graduation	Mickelson Law Enforcement Training Center Pierre, SD Attorney General, law enforcement, and tribal leaders	9/3/2024
"A Tale of Two States" Hillsdale College Young Republicans	Hillsdale College Hillsdale, MI	9/11/2024
Montana Save America Rallies	Billings, Great Falls, & Kalispell, MT	9/22/2024
Governor's Awards for Disability Employment	Capitol Pierre, SD DSS employees, honorees, and family	9/24/2024
ETRIA Products USA Ribbon Cutting & Grand Opening	ETRIA Products USA Mitchell, SD ETRIA employees and execs, local business leaders, and community leaders	10/10/2024
Muth Electric Grand Opening	Muth Electric Prefabrication Office Mitchell, SD Employees, local business leaders, and community leaders	10/10/2024
Town Hall with President Donald J. Trump	Oaks, PA	10/13/2024
Donald J. Trump North Carolina Bus Tour (several stops)	North Carolina	10/17/2024
Donald J. Trump Pennsylvania Bus Tour (several stops)	Pennsylvania	10/23/2024 – 10/24/2024
Donald J. Trump Town Hall with Gov. Kristi Noem in Eau Claire, WI	Eau Claire Event District – Crescent Building Eau Claire, WI	10/28/2024
43rd Annual Law Enforcement Dinner	Sioux Falls Convention Center	10/30/2024

	Sioux Falls, SD Law enforcement, elected officials, and community members, federal delegation	
Team Trump Women's Tour, Atlanta, GA	The Carlyle Venue Atlanta, GA	11/2/2024
President Donald J. Trump Town Hall with Gov. Kristi Noem, Tudor Dixon, & Rep. Kat Cammack	Baker Events Holland, MI	11/3/2024
CJ Schwan's Groundbreaking	Foundation Park Sioux Falls, SD CJ Schwan's execs, local business leaders	11/13/2024
Dean Mann Readiness Center Ribbon Cutting	BG Dean Mann Readiness Center Sioux Falls, SD National Guard, elected officials	11/13/2024
RiskOn360! Global Success Conference	Rio Hotel & Casino Las Vegas, NV	11/25/2024
Budget Address	Capitol Pierre, SD South Dakota citizens	12/3/2024

Appendix C

Title/Topic	Place/Audience	Date
House Floor Speech on Combating Human Trafficking	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	1/26/2015
House Floor Speech on the HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND RECOVERY ACT OF 2015	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	1/27/2015
Address to State Legislators on issues facing Congress	Pierre, SD Members of the State Legislature	2/20/2015
House Floor Speech on the DEATH TAX REPEAL ACT OF 2015	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	4/16/2015
House Floor Speech on the MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	4/29/2015
House Floor Speech on the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	5/13/2015
House Floor Speech on the JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING ACT OF 2015	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	5/18/2015

House Floor Speech on RECOGNIZING MAY AS PREECLAMPSIA AWARENESS MONTH	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	5/26/2015
House Floor Speech on TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	6/4/2015
House Floor Speech on COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELING AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2015	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	6/10/2015
House Floor Speech on ENSURING TAX EXEMPT ORGANIZATIONS THE RIGHT TO APPEAL ACT	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	6/12/2015
House Floor Speech on DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	7/7/2015
House Floor Speech on CONDEMNING THE ACTIONS OF PLANNED PARENTHOOD	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	7/21/2015
House Floor Speech on WELCOMING REVEREND WILLIAM VANDERBUSH	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	9/30/2015
Speech to Nominate Paul Ryan for Speaker	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	10/28/2015

House Floor Speech on TRIBAL LABOR SOVEREIGNTY ACT OF 2015	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	11/17/2015
House Floor Speech on PROVIDING INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE PUBLICATION 17 FREE TO TAXPAYERS	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	4/19/2016
House Floor Speech on PROHIBITING THE USE OF FUNDS BY INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE TO TARGET CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	4/19/2016
House Floor Speech on ENSURING INTEGRITY IN THE IRS WORKFORCE ACT OF 2015	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	4/21/2016
House Floor Speech on NATIONAL BISON LEGACY ACT	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	4/26/2016
Congressional Testimony on Tax-Related Proposals to Improve Health Care	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means	5/17/2016
Congressional Testimony on Legislation to Improve and Sustain the Medicare Program	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means	6/8/2016

Congressional Testimony on Improving Accountability and Quality of Care at the Indian Health Service Through S. 2953	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Indian Affairs	6/17/2016
Speech on work in Congress and support for Donald Trump	Hilton Garden Inn Rapid City, SD Black Hills Forum and Press Club Meeting Attendees	8/27/2016
House Floor Speech on BLACK HILLS NATIONAL CEMETERY BOUNDARY EXPANSION ACT	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	9/6/2016
Speech on Energy Issues	Madison, SD Sioux Valley Energy Customers	10/7/2016
House Floor Speech on WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY ACT OF 2016	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	11/15/2016
House Floor Speech on PRESCRIBED BURN APPROVAL ACT OF 2016	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	12/5/2016
House Floor Speech on NO TAXPAYER FUNDING FOR ABORTION AND ABORTION INSURANCE FULL DISCLOSURE ACT OF 2017	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	1/24/2017
House Floor Speech on BLACK HILLS NATIONAL CEMETERY BOUNDARY EXPANSION ACT	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	2/6/2017

House Floor Speech on HONORING I LOVE LIFE	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	2/16/2017
House Floor Speech on PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF FINAL RULE BY SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	2/16/2017
Address to State Legislators on issues facing Congress	Pierre, SD Members of the State Legislature	2/21/2017
House Floor Speech on AMERICAN HEALTH CARE ACT OF 2017	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	3/24/2017
Congressional Testimony on Agriculture and Tax Reform: Opportunities for Rural America	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture	4/5/2017
House Floor Speech on DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BLUE CAMPAIGN AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2017	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	5/23/2017
House Floor Speech on PARTNERSHIP GRANTS TO STRENGTHEN FAMILIES AFFECTED BY PARENTAL SUBSTANCE ABUSE ACT	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	6/20/2017
House Floor Speech on WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY ACT OF 2017	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	6/20/2017

Congressional Testimony on H.R. 2662, to Amend the Indian Health Care Improvement Act	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources	6/21/2017
House Floor Speech on RECOGNIZING ELLEN SCHLECHTER, 2017 NFIB YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR FINALIST	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	7/26/2017
House Floor Speech on HONORING HOMETOWN NEWSPAPERS	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	9/27/2017
House Floor Speech on CONTROL UNLAWFUL FUGITIVE FELONS ACT OF 2017	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	9/28/2017
House Floor Speech on PROTECTING THE UNBORN	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	10/2/2017
House Floor Speech on CELEBRATING NATIONAL BIBLE WEEK	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	11/14/2017
House Floor Speech on TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	11/15/2017

House Floor Speech on CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1, TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	12/19/2017
House Floor Speech on AMENDING THE WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE TRIBE WATER RIGHTS QUANTIFICATION ACT OF 2010	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	1/10/2018
House Floor Speech on BORN-ALIVE ABORTION SURVIVORS PROTECTION ACT	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	1/19/2018
House Floor Speech on IMPROVING RURAL CALL QUALITY AND RELIABILITY ACT OF 2017	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	2/8/2018
House Floor Speech on BLACK HILLS NATIONAL CEMETERY BOUNDARY EXPANSION ACT	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	5/15/2018
House Floor Speech on AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2018	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	5/17/2018
House Floor Speech on AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2018	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	5/18/2018
House Floor Speech on THE PROPOSED PROTECTING LIFE RULE	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	5/21/2018

Speech on "Operation: Rally Point" to better serve South Dakota veterans	Veterans Home in Hot Springs Hot Springs, SD Veterans	8/27/2018
House Floor Speech on HONORING RED ARNDT FOR YEARS OF SERVICE	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	9/27/2018
House Floor Speech on PROTECTING FAMILY AND SMALL BUSINESS TAX CUTS ACT OF 2018	U.S. Capitol Washington, DC Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	9/28/2018
Gubernatorial Victory Speech	Sioux Falls, SD Campaign staff and supporters	11/6/2018
South Dakota State of the State Address	Pierre, SD Legislature	1/8/2019
Sanctity of Human Life Sunday	2nd Floor of Capitol Rotunda, Pierre, SD South Dakota Right to Life Members and National LIFE Runners Team	1/20/2019
Governor Noem's Budget Message	Pierre, SD Legislature	1/23/2019
School Administrators of SD - Outstanding Administrator Award Luncheon	Ramkota Hotel, Pierre, SD	1/30/2019
SD Home Builders Association Board Meeting	Red Rossa Italian Grille, Conference Room, Pierre, SD Home Builders Association Board Members	1/31/2019

SD Medical Student Visit	Capitol Visitor Center Medical students and faculty	1/31/2019
Bill Signing – SB47, repeal and revise certain provisions regarding permits to carry a concealed pistol	Capitol Rotunda	1/31/2019
SD Nurses Association Luncheon	Ramkota, Pierre, SD	2/5/2019
Military Dining Out	Ramkota River Center, Pierre, SD South Dakota National Guard, Legislators, and families	2/7/2019
24th Biennial Governor's Awards in the Arts	Ramkota Hotel & Conference Center, Pierre, SD	2/12/2019
State Tribal Relations Rotunda Ceremony Welcome	Capitol Rotunda Legislators, tribal leaders, and the public	2/27/2019
Sioux Falls Priorities Day	Holiday Inn City Centre, Starlite Ballroom, Sioux Falls, SD Sioux Falls Chamber of Commerce	2/28/2019
Rapid City Priorities Day	La Croix Hall, Rapid City, SD Rapid City Chamber of Commerce	2/28/2019
South Dakota Law Enforcement Academy Class 169th Graduation	George Mickelson Building Gymnasium, Pierre, SD Law Enforcement, state officers, and families	3/1/2019
Human Trafficking Awareness Conference	Ramkota, Pierre, SD Providers, practitioners, and the public	3/7/2019

GFP Conservation Summit	Red Rossa, Pierre, SD Game, Fish, & Parks Commissioners and staff, and stakeholders	3/28/2019
B-21 Announcement	Alex Johnson Hotel, Rapid City, SD Local officials and federal delegation	4/5/2019
Emily's Hope	Ramkota Hotel, Pierre, SD Mental Health professionals, Law Enforcement agencies, Probation, Parole, Corrections, Community Outreach, High schools, 8th grade classes, Clergy, Domestic Violence Centers, Pharmacies, Medical Providers and Recovery Clients in the community	4/8/2019
LATI Governor's Lunch	LATI - Student Center entrance, Watertown, SD Business, industry, community members, and educators	4/9/2019
Governor's Conference on Economic Development	Sioux Falls Convention Center, Sioux Falls, SD Economic development community	4/11/2019
PFBA Annual Conference	Hilton Garden Inn Downtown, Sioux Falls, SD Prairie Family Business Association members and the public	4/11/2019
Bill Signing	SD Air & Space Museum, Ellsworth AFB, SD Military personnel	4/12/2019
ROTC Governor's Day Ceremony	Sanford Jackrabbit Athletic Complex, Brookings, SD Cadets, guardsmen, and retirees	4/15/2019
Prayer Breakfast	Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD Faith and Hope Community	4/18/2019
Centers of Academic Excellence in Cybersecurity Plenary Address	Hilton – Royal Palm Ballroom, Pensacola, FL Executive cybersecurity leaders from academia, government, industry, and armed forces	4/24/2019

NGASD & SDNGEA State Conference	Holiday Inn, Rapid City, SD SD National Guard members, enlisted and officers	4/26/2019
Academic Excellence Recognition	Ramkota, Pierre, SD Students and parents, SD Sec. of Education, Association School Board Members	4/29/2019
Ethiopian Easter	Sioux Falls Convention Center Sioux Falls, SD /Adam Thermal Foundation Members, director of African Operations and Ministry, and the public	4/30/2019
Executive Roundtable Luncheon: First 100 Days	Omni Louisville Hotel, Louisville, KY RGA Executive Roundtable members (CEO/President/Executive Level personal donors to RGA) and other Governors and staff	5/15/2019
DAV Annual Convention	Hilton Garden Inn, Sioux Falls, SD DAV and Auxiliary members	5/17/2019
Tribal Meth Conference	Red Rossa, Pierre, SD Tribal leaders, US attorneys, members from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and other people from programs dealing with meth.	5/20/2019
Welcome Firefighters Picnic	Hill City Memorial Park, Hill City, SD Wildland Fire staff (firefighters and admin), seasonal firefighters, and some SDDA staff	5/22/2019
New Hope Memorial Day Program	New Hope Church, Hayti, SD Community Members	5/27/2019
Bryan Memorial Day Program	Bryant Auditorium, Bryant, SD American Legion Members and community	5/27/2019
Girls State	Muenster University Center, Vermillion, SD Girls State attendees	5/30/2019

Boys State	Johnson Fine Arts Center, Aberdeen, SD Boys State attendees	5/30/2019
Legion Department Convention	Sioux Falls Convention Center, Sioux Falls, SD American Legion members, federal delegation, and local officials	6/8/2019
Legion Auxiliary Convention	Sioux Falls Convention Center, Sioux Falls, SD American Legion Auxiliary members	6/8/2019
TAG Change of Command	Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD South Dakota National Guard Members	6/8/2019
Young Women's Leadership Summit	Hyatt Regency Dallas, Dallas, Texas Turning Point USA members	6/9/2019
Minnesota Chamber Event	Nicollet Island Pavillion, Minneapolis, MN Women Business Leaders	6/19/2019
GenCyber Girls CybHER Security Camp	Tunheim Classroom Building, Madison, SD Students and families	6/26/2019
DOH Conference	Ramkota Hotel, Pierre, SD State Employees	7/9/2019
Lake Poinsett Visit	Living Waters Retreat Center at Lake Poinsett Camp, Arlington, SD Community Members	7/20/2019
Lake Thompson Visit	GFP Maintenance Shop, Lake Preston, SD Community Members	7/20/2019

Welcome Home Ceremony for Detachment 1, CO B, 935th Aviation Support Battalion	Rapid City Regional Airport Army Aviation Support Facility Detachment 1, CO B, 935th Aviation Support Battalion and family	7/21/2019
152nd CSSB Activation Ceremony	T.F. Riggs High School, Pierre, SD 52nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion and family	7/27/2019
Carnegie Hero Award Presentation	Castlewood Fire Hall, Castlewood, SD Community Members	8/10/2019
Evening for the Kids Event	Sioux Falls Convention Center, Sioux Falls, SD Children's Home Foundation employees, local officials, and community members	8/11/2019
SDVA School	Ramkota, Pierre, SD SD Dept. of Veterans Affair employees	8/28/2019
Century Farms	State Fair-Dakotaland Stage, Huron, SD Farming and ranching community	8/29/2019
Salute to Vets	NorthWestern Energy Freedom Stage, Huron, SD Veterans and local officials	8/29/2019
Iverson Auto's Groundbreaking	Huron, SD Local officials, and Iverson auto employees	8/30/2019
Signify Health Groundbreaking	Rapid City, SD Local officials, employees, and community members	9/4/2019
State Cemetery Groundbreaking		9/9/2019

Step up for Heroes Memorial Stair Climb		9/21/2019
NRA Women's Leadership Forum Summit	La Cantera Resort, San Antonio, TX Elected officials and women NRA members	9/28/2019
BHR Leadership Conference	Ramkota, Pierre, SD SD state agencies and community leaders	10/1/2019
Wellness Symposium: Methamphetamine Epidemic	Northern State University, Aberdeen, SD Community members	10/15/2019
Care Campus Ribbon Cutting	Care Campus, Rapid City, SD County officials and law enforcement	10/16/2019
1Mitchell Pheasants Forever Annual Event	Mitchell Corn Palace, Michell, SD Community members and hunters	10/18/2019
16th Tri State Governor's Conference	Holiday Inn Express & Suites Dakota Dunes Event Center, Dakota Dunes, SD Governors of Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota	10/21/2019
United in Hope Edith Sanford Luncheon	The Sanford Barn, Sioux Falls, SD Local officials, Sanford Health Foundation	10/23/2019
Welcome Home Ceremony for B-Battery, 1-147th Field Artillery	Lincoln High School- Gymnasium, Sioux Falls, SD B-Battery, 1-147th Field Artillery and family.	10/26/2019
South Dakota Emergency Medical Services Association Annual Convention	Aberdeen Civic Center, Aberdeen, SD EMTs and emergency service providers.	11/1/2019

Bethany Christian Services Banquet - Family Changes Everything	Holiday Inn City Centre, Sioux Falls, SD Church delegation	11/7/2019
Law Enforcement Reception Dinner	Johnson, Janklow, Abdallah & Reiter, LLP, Sioux Falls, SD Law enforcement and business leaders	11/13/2019
SD Veteran Bridge Naming Kick Off	Bridge on US 38/North River Street, Hot Springs, SD Local officials and community members	11/26/2019
Governor's Budget Address for FY 2021	Pierre, SD Legislature	12/3/2019
Women's Suffrage Event	South Dakota Capitol	12/4/2019
LEADS Conference	Sioux Falls Convention Center, Sioux Falls, SD Dept. of Education and Social Services employees and community members	12/9/2019
Watertown Kiwanis	Ramkota, Watertown, SD Elected officials and community members	12/30/2019

REDACTED

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF
GOVERNMENT ETHICS

January 13, 2025

The Honorable Rand Paul
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In accordance with the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, I enclose a copy of the financial disclosure report filed by Kristi Noem. President-Elect Trump has announced his intention to nominate Kristi Noem for the position of Secretary, Department of Homeland Security.

We have reviewed the report and have obtained advice from the agency concerning any possible conflict in light of its functions and the nominee's proposed duties. Also enclosed is an ethics agreement outlining the actions that the nominee will undertake to avoid conflicts of interest. Unless a date for compliance is indicated in the ethics agreement, the nominee must fully comply within three months of confirmation with any action specified in the ethics agreement.

Based thereon, we believe that this nominee is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest.

Sincerely,

DAVID HUITEMA

Digitally signed by DAVID HUITEMA
Date: 2025.01.13 10:14:17 -05'00'

David Huitema
Director

Enclosures REDACTED

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January 12, 2025

Mr. John Havranek
Designated Agency Ethics Official
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Mr. Havranek:

The purpose of this letter is to describe the steps that I will take to avoid any actual or apparent conflict of interest in the event that I am confirmed for the position of Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. It is my responsibility to understand and comply with commitments outlined in this agreement.

SECTION 1 – GENERAL COMMITMENTS

As required by the criminal conflicts of interest law at 18 U.S.C. § 208(a), I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter in which I know that I have a financial interest directly and predictably affected by the matter, or in which I know that a person whose interests are imputed to me has a financial interest directly and predictably affected by the particular matter, unless I first obtain a written waiver, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(1), or qualify for a regulatory exemption, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(2). I understand that the interests of the following persons are imputed to me:

- Any spouse or minor child of mine;
- Any general partner of a partnership in which I am a limited or general partner;
- Any organization in which I serve as an officer, director, trustee, general partner, or employee, even if uncompensated; and
- Any person or organization with which I am negotiating or have an arrangement concerning prospective employment.

In the event that an actual or potential conflict of interest arises during my appointment, I will consult with an agency ethics official and take the measures necessary to resolve the conflict, such as recusal from the particular matter or divestiture of an asset.

If I have a managed account or otherwise use the services of an investment professional during my appointment, I will ensure that the account manager or investment professional obtains my prior approval on a case-by-case basis for the purchase of any assets other than cash, cash equivalents, investment funds that qualify for the regulatory exemption for diversified mutual funds and unit investment trusts at 5 C.F.R. § 2640.201(a), obligations of the United States, or municipal bonds.

I will receive a live ethics briefing from a member of the ethics office after my confirmation but not later than 15 days after my appointment pursuant to the ethics program regulation at 5 C.F.R. § 2638.305. Within 90 days of my confirmation, I will submit my

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Certification of Ethics Agreement Compliance which documents my compliance with this ethics agreement.

I will not modify this ethics agreement without your approval and the approval of the U.S. Office of Government Ethics (OGE) pursuant to the ethics agreement requirements contained in the financial disclosure regulation at 5 C.F.R. § 2634.803(a)(4).

SECTION 2 – STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA

Upon confirmation, I will resign from my position as Governor of the State of South Dakota. For a period of one year after my resignation, I will have a "covered relationship" under the impartiality regulation at 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502 with the State of South Dakota. Pursuant to 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502(d) and in consultation with the Designated Agency Ethics Official, I will receive a written authorization to participate personally and substantially in particular matters involving specific parties in which I know the State of South Dakota is a party or represents a party. Until such an authorization is granted, I will recuse pursuant to the impartiality regulation at 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502 for a period of one year after my resignation.

SECTION 3 – ASHWOOD STRATEGIES, LLC

Upon confirmation, I will resign from my position as Managing Member of Ashwood Strategies, LLC. I will continue to have a financial interest in this entity, but I will not provide services material to the production of income. Instead, if I receive any income from Ashwood Strategies, LLC in the future, I will receive only passive investment income from it. I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter that to my knowledge has a direct and predictable effect on the financial interests of Ashwood Strategies, LLC, unless I first obtain a written waiver, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(1).

SECTION 4 – DIVESTITURES

As soon as practicable but not later than 90 days after my confirmation, I will divest my interest in Granite Falls Energy, LLC. I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter that to my knowledge has a direct and predictable effect on the financial interests of the entity until I have divested it, unless I first obtain a written waiver, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(1), or qualify for a regulatory exemption, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(2). I have verified that I will be able to carry out the divestitures within the timeframe described above.

I understand that I may be eligible to request a Certificate of Divestiture for qualifying assets and that a Certificate of Divestiture is effective only if obtained prior to divestiture. Regardless of whether I receive a Certificate of Divestiture, I will ensure that all divestitures discussed in this agreement occur within the agreed upon timeframes and that all proceeds are invested in non-conflicting assets. I understand that I must submit my request for a Certificate of Divestiture to allow for adequate time for OGE to process the Certificate of Divestiture, and in order to divest assets within the agreed upon timeframe.

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I (including my spouse and minor children if applicable) will not repurchase any asset I was required to divest without my consultation with my agency ethics official and the U.S. Office of Government Ethics.

SECTION 5 – SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT

My spouse is the sole shareholder of his insurance firm, which does business as Noem Insurance, LLC. I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter that to my knowledge has a direct and predictable effect on the financial interests of Noem Insurance, LLC, unless I first obtain a written waiver, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(l). Pursuant to the impartiality regulation at 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502, I also will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter involving specific parties in which I know a client of my spouse is a party or represents a party, unless I am first authorized to participate, pursuant to 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502(d).

SECTION 6 – PUBLIC POSTING

I have been advised that this ethics agreement and the Certification of Ethics Agreement Compliance will be posted publicly, consistent with the public information law at 5 U.S.C. § 552, on the website of the U.S. Office of Government Ethics with ethics agreements of other presidential nominees who file public financial disclosure reports.

Sincerely,

Kristi Noem

Kristi Noem

U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Pre-hearing Questionnaire
For the Nomination of Kristi Noem
to be Secretary, Department of Homeland Security

I. Nomination Process and Conflicts of Interest

1. **Did the President-Elect give you specific reasons why he nominated you to be the next Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS or "the Department"), and if so, what are they?**

   On November 12, 2024, the President-Elect announced my nomination and shared why he selected me for the position. He said, "I am pleased to announce that the Governor and former Congresswoman from South Dakota, Kristi Noem, will be appointed to serve as the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Kristi has been very strong on Border Security. She was the first Governor to send National Guard Soldiers to help Texas fight the Biden Border Crisis, and they were sent a total of eight times. She will work closely with 'Border Czar' Tom Homan to secure the Border, and will guarantee that our American Homeland is secure from our adversaries. I have known Kristi for years, and have worked with her on a wide variety of projects – She will be a great part of our mission to Make America Safe Again."

2. **Were any conditions, expressed or implied, attached to your proposed nomination? If so, please explain.**

   There were no conditions attached to my nomination other than to fulfill the Department of Homeland Security's "noble mission of safeguarding the American people, our homeland, and our values."

3. **Have you made any commitments with respect to the policies and principles you will attempt to implement as Secretary? If so, what are they, and to whom were the commitments made?**

   I have made no commitments other than to help the President-Elect accomplish the priorities that he was elected to deliver on for the American people, which includes securing the border and restoring safety to American communities.

4. **If confirmed, do you commit to upholding the Constitution and the rule of law?**

   Yes.

5. **If the President or anyone acting at the direction of the President or on his behalf asks you to violate the law, will you decline to do so?**

   I am committed to upholding the Constitution and the rule of law.

6. Are you aware of any business relationship, dealing, or financial transaction that can result in a possible conflict of interest for you or the appearance of a conflict of interest? If so, please explain what procedures you will use to recuse yourself or otherwise address the conflict. And if you will recuse yourself, explain how you will ensure your responsibilities are not affected by your recusal.

I am not aware of any actual or potential conflicts of interest. As part of the nomination process, I will consult with the Office of Government Ethics and the Department of Homeland Security's Designated Agency Official to identify and address any potential conflicts of interest. I commit to providing this Committee with a copy of any resulting ethics agreement.

Should I need to recuse myself from a particular matter in the future, I will follow appropriate guidance and ensure that the Deputy Secretary or other appropriate senior official at the Department fulfills the responsibilities presented by the matter.

7. Have you or any organization of which you were an officer, director or owner, or have or had a significant financial interest in, been the recipient of any Federal grants, loans, or other financial assistance (such as, but not limited to, Paycheck Protection Program Loans, Economic Injury Disaster Loans, Restaurant Revitalization Grants, etc.) within the past 10 years? If so, please list the program, amount, and date of receipt.

Neither I nor any organization in which I have been an officer, director, or owner, or have had a direct significant financial interest within the past 10 years have received any Federal grants, loans, or other financial assistance during that time.

8. Please provide the name of any individual, law firm, consulting firm, lobbying firm, public relations firm, or other entity you have formally retained or contracted with regarding this nomination, including any amounts paid in fees or otherwise.

I retained the law firm WilmerHale to provide legal advice regarding documentation required by the nomination process. I have not retained WilmerHale or any other entity to advocate on my behalf regarding my nomination or potential Senate confirmation.

9. Has anyone ever requested or received any financial benefit from you or anyone on your behalf in exchange for perceived, intended, or actual support for or solicitation or offer of promotion to any political office, including without limitation this nomination?

No.

II. Background of the Nominee

10. Why do you want to serve as the Secretary of Homeland Security?

The Department of Homeland Security performs a vital role in safeguarding the American people. The Secretary is tasked with setting a course for the Department, identifying the key issues that put the Homeland at risk, and focusing resources, personnel, and attention on those challenges to keep America safe. I have been honored to perform these tasks and

others over the past six years for the people of South Dakota. If confirmed, I will lead the Department of Homeland Security and safeguard our country on behalf of all Americans.

11. What specific background, experience, and attributes affirmatively qualify you to be Secretary?

I have the leadership skills necessary to serve as Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. I have been responsible for supervising employees and managing budgets since I took over my family's ranch following the unexpected passing of my father. I continued to do so when serving in the South Dakota legislature from 2007 until 2011, where I represented the interests of South Dakotans living in the Sixth District. In 2010, the people of South Dakota elected me to serve as their sole representative in the U.S. House of Representatives, which I proudly did from 2011 until 2019. While in Congress, I served on the House Ways and Means Committee, where I assisted in reviewing and making recommendations for our government's budgets. As a Congresswoman, I worked to pass the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which gave the average South Dakota family $2,400 after tax income, advocated for Farm Bills, and supported our veterans.

In 2018, I was elected as South Dakota's first-ever female governor on a platform of protecting South Dakotans against tax increases, government growth, federal intrusion, and government secrecy. I was reelected to serve in 2022, receiving the largest vote total in South Dakota's history, demonstrating the confidence that South Dakotans have in my leadership abilities.

Throughout my career, I have also worked on issues directly related to the Department of Homeland Security. For example, while serving in Congress, I served on the House Armed Services Committee, where I led on national security issues and interfaced with officials and servicemembers at strategic locations and military bases both in the United States and overseas. As Governor, I have already worked to protect our homeland. In South Dakota, I oversee all of our state law enforcement agencies, including the South Dakota Highway Patrol. I have also partnered with tribal governments, which have their own tribal police, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs to keep all parts of South Dakota safe. As one example, I established the first ever tribal law enforcement academy in South Dakota with the cooperation of many state and federal law enforcement agencies. This training center is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Homeland Security. I have also stepped up to lead during times of natural disasters. I have worked extensively with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) programs and its personnel to respond to federal disasters across South Dakota. I therefore understand the interaction between FEMA and state and local governments and entities, which will serve me well if confirmed as Secretary.

In addition, under my leadership, South Dakota has increased its focus on cybersecurity, further developing educational programs. For example, I worked to help secure millions of dollars for cybersecurity programs at Dakota State University (DSU). With this funding, DSU can double the number of computer science graduates and build an additional cyber lab. High school students can also enroll in cybersecurity courses for college credit. In America, we need to educate cyber warriors, who will protect the public, government entities, and our national infrastructure from cyber threats posed by those who wish to harm us.

From my seat as Governor of South Dakota, I have also been able to help protect Americans across the country. For example, when Texas Governor Greg Abbott asked for help in securing the Southern Border, I deployed South Dakota National Guard troops on multiple occasions. With the influx of illegal immigrants pouring into our country, we have seen a spike in drugs, crime, violence, and trafficking among other serious issues. I have also diversified our food supply chain, which is critical to national security, by allowing certain South Dakota state-inspected meat processers to ship meat across state lines. In recent years, I have sounded the alarm bell on the threat that China poses to America's agriculture. The Chinese Communist Party is buying our agricultural land. When Chinese nationals reached out to the South Dakota Department of Agriculture and National Resources, we turned down their request to meet, recognizing the threat these individuals posed. Later, we learned from the State Department that these individuals were Chinese spies, seeking to steal information about our crops and intellectual property. In early 2024, I signed a bill into law that prevents adversarial foreign governments – specifically, China, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Russia, and Venezuela – and entities from those governments from purchasing agricultural land in South Dakota. America must continue to take bold, decisive action to protect our homeland. If confirmed as Secretary, I will continue to defend our nation while serving with integrity and upholding the rule of law.

12. Please describe:

a. Your leadership and management style:

My role as a leader is to identify solutions to complex issues while promoting transparency and understanding the immense trust that is placed in my hands. I strive to create opportunities for our next generation and uphold America's longstanding values. When a difficult decision is presented, my first question is whether the decision is constitutional and whether I have the authority to take action in my capacity as Governor according to the South Dakota Constitution and the U.S. Constitution. I ask these questions because these documents are our foundation, and I believe that when leaders overstep their constitutional authority, especially in times of crisis, that is when we lose our country and freedoms.

In managing my staff as Governor, I emphasize the importance of accountability and serving the people. In South Dakota, our motto is "Under God, the People Rule." My staff and I delivered a balanced budget, oversaw the lowest unemployment rate of any state in the history of the United States of America, prioritized education, and built a transparent state government. As Governor, I also signed an Executive Order that requires state employees to participate in trainings that cover the core principles of what it means to be a state steward. These trainings cover topics such as public trust, conflicts of interest, and developing a service mindset. If confirmed as Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, I will instill these same principles in my staff.

I always tell my staff that when they identify a challenge or issue for me, they should also be prepared to share the solutions or options for handling the situation. I believe in taking a proactive approach, and this way of thinking encourages the whole team to be on board with acting immediately when an issue arises.

b. Your experience managing personnel:

I gained managerial experience early in life, when I had to leave college early at the age of 22 to take over the leadership of our family farm and ranch after my father suddenly passed away. That same year, I also gave birth to my first child. I had to quickly learn how to run a small business while also learning how to be a mother. In the years that followed, we added a hunting lodge and a restaurant to the property. Each time, I hired and managed more employees to help the family business thrive.

I continued to manage personnel as a state legislator and party leader, while working with my siblings to keep the family business going. When I served in Congress, I was no longer running the family business, but I continued to lead my staff. As Governor of South Dakota, I now lead thousands of state employees in managing every aspect of our wonderful state, including enforcing the law, promoting public safety, encouraging economic development, and helping our farms and small businesses thrive. South Dakota is an example of fiscal responsibility, limited government, and what can be accomplished when we put our trust in our people and respect their Freedom.

c. What is the largest number of people that have worked under you?

As Governor of South Dakota, I am honored to lead more than 7,000 state employees.

13. What would you consider your greatest successes as a leader?

As Governor, I have consistently worked to improve the lives of all South Dakotans. My successes have included developing a prosperous economy, breaking the national record for the lowest unemployment rate in American history at 1.8%, ushering in the largest tax cut in South Dakota history, watching South Dakotan incomes rise 36% during my tenure, and protecting South Dakotans' freedom, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic when South Dakota was the only state that remained open for business and never issued any mandates.

On a personal level, my greatest success has been raising my three children, Kassidy, Kennedy, and Booker.

14. What do you consider your greatest failure as a leader, and what lessons did you take away from that experience?

Based on a number of experiences, I have learned it is important to allow others to voice their opinions and engage in discussion before arriving at my own decision. It is always beneficial to hear different perspectives and counterpoints. An organization that has people who have been able to refine their leadership skills in this way provides a more stable environment for everyone.

15. Please give examples of times in your career when you disagreed with your superiors and advocated your position. Describe circumstances in which you were successful and in which you were unsuccessful.

As a longtime elected official, I have not had a superior in some time.

But when I disagreed with the federal government's approach to security at the Southern Border, I knew I had to take a stand. I looked to the U.S. and South Dakota Constitutions and, as Governor, I announced that South Dakota was to be the first state to send National Guard troops to the Southern Border at the request of Texas Governor Abbott. This decisive action was taken to address the border crisis, which has far-reaching implications for national security, public safety, human trafficking, and drug trafficking. Despite federal inaction, South Dakota played its part in trying to keep the nation safe.

Likewise, when many government authorities engaged in overreach during the COVID-19 pandemic, I did not surrender to political peer pressure. Unlike many governors across America, I did not shut down South Dakota. In fact, South Dakota was the only state that never once issued a mandate to our people and never closed any businesses. I was also the only governor that never defined what constituted an "essential" business because I believed – and continue to believe – that all businesses are essential. While many disagreed with these decisions at the time, I believed that it was the right approach for the people of South Dakota.

If confirmed as Secretary, I will continue to make decisions that I believe are in the best interest of the American people. I will do everything I can to keep Americans safe through a commonsense approach to homeland security.

16. Do you seek out dissenting views and encourage constructive dialogue? Please provide examples of times in your career when you have done so.

I believe it is important to include multiple perspectives and viewpoints in any decision-making process. I have a very candid relationship with my staff and team members and they know their opinions will be valued regardless of any potential positions taken. I also meet regularly with some of my greatest critics and spend time with those who do not necessarily share my views.

17. Please list and describe examples of when you made politically difficult choices that you thought were in the best interest of the country or an organization.

As described in response to Question 15, as Governor, I have had to make many politically difficult choices, including not issuing statewide lockdowns or business closures during the COVID-19 pandemic and being the first state to deploy National Guard troops to the Southern Border. I have also opposed the statewide legalization of recreational marijuana. Each of these tough decisions were taken with determination and in the best interests of South Dakotans. I believe leaders must stand up for what is right, even if it could be harmful politically.

18. Please describe how you build credibility and trust among staff as a leader.

As a leader, I listen to my staff and encourage them to raise their own ideas, concerns, and recommendations. I seek open communication channels, which help establish credibility and trust across the team. I also work to never surprise my staff or the people with whom I am working. I consider it important to share information I receive as soon as I can because it helps them to act as needed and be better informed in future situations.

19. During your career, has your conduct as a government employee ever been subject to an investigation or audit by the Office of Special Counsel, Department of Justice, agency Equal Opportunity office or investigator, agency Inspector General, congressional ethics committee, or any other similar federal, state, or local investigative entity? If so, please describe the nature of the allegations/conduct and the outcome(s) of the investigation(s) or audit(s).

I have been subject to two complaints filed with the South Dakota Government Accountability Board in September 2021. One complaint regarding a potential conflict of interest was resolved in August 2022. The other complaint regarding alleged misuse of a state airplane to conduct state business was dismissed by the Board in December 2022. I am not aware of any other government investigations.

20. It has been reported that you spent more than $68,000 in taxpayer money redecorating the South Dakota Governor's Mansion. Please describe what you spent this money on and if you believe it to be an efficient and productive use of taxpayer dollars.

As Governor, I am entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining the governor's residence, which was built with the support of private and business donations. Like my predecessors, I have made necessary renovations to maintain and care for the residence over time. These include updates to the Governor's office, office staff suite, conference room, and residence elevator to replace fixtures that were outdated or damaged – including items that had outlived their lifespans. These renovations ensure that the residence will continue to be useful and in good condition for future governors selected by South Dakotans. The amount spent on these renovations is consistent with – or when adjusted for inflation, less than – the amount spent by my predecessors.

21. Is it accurate to say that you are currently prohibited from entering all nine Indian reservations in South Dakota? Can you please describe what led these tribes to ban you from their lands and what, if any, actions you are taking to improve relations with the Indigenous community? Please include any lessons learned.

I was originally barred from entering a tribal reservation over my support for the Keystone XL Pipeline, which would have gone through South Dakota without crossing tribal lands in the state. I was subsequently barred from additional tribal reservations after ordering tribes to remove illegal highway checkpoints they had erected on state and federal highways. I offered the tribes assistance to conduct legal checkpoints on tribal roads, but I would not allow them to break the law and shut down state and federal highways.

Finally, additional tribes barred me after I spoke out about the presence of cartel affiliates on reservations in the state and the public safety challenges in tribal areas. As Governor, I have worked to protect all South Dakotans, including by stopping the flow of illegal immigrants, drugs, and crime into our state. I remain committed to working with all South Dakotan communities to safeguard our people against the threats they are facing.

22. A South Dakota ethics board found that you may have engaged in misconduct when you intervened to help your daughter secure a real estate appraiser license. Can you please describe the actions you took to help your daughter get a license?

Contrary to political smears in the media, I never asked for, and my daughter did not receive special treatment, nor have I taken any improper action.

23. In your responses to the Committee's biographical questionnaire you disclosed a September 28, 2021 complaint filed with the South Dakota Government Accountability Board regarding "alleged misuse of a state airplane to conduct state business." You stated the complaint was dismissed in December 2022. Please describe the specific allegations made in this complaint and the basis on which the complaint was dismissed, including any specific findings or recommendations made by the Board.

In 2021, a disgraced and impeached former South Dakota Attorney General, Jason Ravnsborg, filed a complaint with the State's Government Accountability Board alleging misuse of the state airplane to conduct state business. The Government Accountability Board reviewed the allegations and unanimously voted to dismiss the complaint. I have always used the state airplane for appropriate official business according to state law and the precedent set by previous governors.

24. In your responses to the Committee's biographical questionnaire you disclosed a September 28, 2021 complaint filed with the South Dakota Government Accountability Board regarding "a potential conflict of interest." You stated the complaint was "resolved" in August 2022. Please describe the specific allegations made in this complaint and explain how this complaint was resolved, including any specific findings or recommendations made by the Board.

In 2021, a disgraced and impeached former South Dakota Attorney General, Jason Ravnsborg, filed a complaint with the State's Government Accountability Board alleging a potential conflict of interest related to my daughter's presence at a meeting with officials responsible for the South Dakota's Appraiser Certification Program. The Board communicated privately with me and decided no further action was necessary.

25. []

This question relates to confidential private tax information. I have responded separately.

26. Please describe your relationship to and financial interest in the following entities:

a. Noem Properties, LLC

Noem Properties is my husband's rental property business.

b. Granite Falls Energy, LLC

Granite Falls Energy is a producer of renewable fuels in which my husband and I have a small passive investment interest.

c. Pierre Car Wash, LLC

Pierre Car Wash is a car wash business involving my husband.

d. Noem Insurance, LLC

Noem Insurance is my husband's insurance business.

e. Glacial Lakes Energy, LLC / Glacial Lakes Energy Exports

Glacial Lakes Energy is an ethanol production facility in which I previously held a small passive investment interest. The interest was sold in 2022.

f. BNP Properties, LLC

BNP Properties is a company involving my husband that previously had a food/beverage business.

27. A lawsuit filed in March 2024 and dismissed in May 2024 alleged that a video you posted on social media promoting Smile Dental constituted an "undisclosed advertisement."

a. Please explain the circumstances surrounding video you made and posted promoting this business.

As I often do, I shared a personal story and experience on social media of my interaction with a small business. I have posted dozens of such videos over the years. The video was not an advertisement, and I was not paid to post it.

b. Have you ever received any payment, including free or discounted services, from or on behalf of a business in exchange for promoting that business on social media?

No.

III. Role of the Secretary of DHS

28. What do you consider to be the core mission of the Department, and what would you consider to be your role and responsibilities if confirmed as the Secretary?

The mission of the Department of Homeland Security is, with honor and integrity, to safeguard the American People, our homeland, and our values. The Secretary is tasked with setting a course for the Department, identifying the key issues that put the Homeland at risk, and focusing resources, personnel, and attention on those challenges to keep America safe. That starts with securing our Southern Border. As well, the Department must address critical problems like securing infrastructure against terrorism and cyberattacks, protecting America's borders, and thwarting transnational crime. If confirmed, I intend to achieve those goals by making the Department more efficient, unifying its components and offices behind a single mission, and holding leaders accountable for their performance. In all of these efforts, I will work with Congress to ensure proper oversight and resourcing and to keep the Department accountable to the American People.

29. Please describe your understanding of the authorities of the Secretary and how those authorities facilitate the core mission of the Department.

The Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security has many important legal authorities to protect the Homeland. Among these are exercising direction, authority, and control over the Department; coordinating with state and local officials; participating in meetings of the National Security Council as directed by the President; advising the President on issues related to the protection of the Homeland; administering and enforcing the immigration laws; protecting public property; safeguarding America's cybersecurity infrastructure; and coordinating the efforts of the components and employees that comprise the Department. Taken together, these authorities and others empower the Secretary to take all necessary actions, in accordance with the law, to protect the Homeland and to keep the American People secure.

30. Do you believe the Department has expanded beyond its intended mission when it was created?

The Department of Homeland Security has expanded over time. Anytime there is expansion at a large organization, leadership needs to consider whether each part of the organization is adding value and furthering its mission. If confirmed, I will ensure that each part of the Department is working to secure and protect the American people.

31. Are there components in the Department that are conducting duplicative activities to other agencies that can be eliminated?

If confirmed, I will closely examine whether there are redundant activities occurring within the Department.

32. As you advise the President, what qualities will you look for in recommending people for leadership positions? What positions would be your highest priority to fill? What level of input do you expect on the appointees selected for leadership roles?

As I have done in South Dakota, I will seek talented, hardworking, and solution-oriented individuals who demonstrate integrity and a commitment to public service. As public service must be responsive to the will of the American people as expressed through their votes, I will also look for a commitment to advancing the President-Elect's agenda.

33. President-Elect Trump has announced plans for Thomas Homan to serve as "border czar" and Stephen Miller to serve as White House deputy chief of staff for policy. Please describe how you plan to work with the Border Czar and White House Deputy Chief of Staff to secure the border?

If confirmed, I plan to work closely with President-Elect Trump and all of his staff, including in the White House and at other federal agencies. I would like to collaborate with anyone who can help the Department of Homeland Security better serve the American people.

34. In your view, how has the Department's core mission evolved since its inception, if at all? What do you think the Department's core mission should be for the next decade?

The Department was created in 2002, following the 9/11 Terrorist Attacks. The Department's core mission has always been to secure the Homeland and protect the American people. If I am confirmed, the Department will proudly uphold that mission.

35. If confirmed, what would be the highest priority items you would focus on? What do you hope to accomplish during your tenure?

Protecting the Homeland will be my top priority if I am confirmed. I will work to secure our border so that we can stop the flow of illegal immigrants, drugs, and crime into our country. Securing the border will also reduce human trafficking and prevent terrorists from having easy access into the United States. The Department must also help strengthen cybersecurity and protect our economy from our foreign adversaries. In times of natural disasters, the Department and in particular FEMA must stand ready to rapidly help those in need.

36. The Secretary of Homeland Security must often make decisions that are independent of political considerations to uphold the Department's mission of safeguarding national security and public safety. This often involves receiving, assessing, and acting on the recommendations of seasoned civil servants with deep expertise in these areas. Will you commit to making decisions based on the law, evidence, and the best interests of the country, even if it means going against pressure from the President or senior administration officials?

I am committed to making decisions that are based on the law, sound information, and the best interests of the American people. If confirmed, I will welcome the input and expertise of all of the Department's dedicated employees.

37. Civil servants at the Department play a critical role in ensuring national security and public safety. Will you commit to protecting civil servants from political attacks?

I am committed to ensuring that all employees at the Department have the opportunity and resources necessary to perform their duties.

38. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that the Department abides by all applicable court decisions and orders?

Yes.

IV. Policy Questions

Biosecurity & COVID-19

39. What is your understanding of the Department's role in the federal government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

A key role of the Department is to help counter threats to our Homeland, including from pandemics like COVID-19. In this mission, the Department must be transparent with the American people, communicating accurate and timely information.

40. Will you commit to providing this Committee unredacted copies of all documents that relate to COVID-19 and/or dual use research of concern?

If confirmed, in accordance with relevant guidance from the Department of Justice, I agree to comply with reasonable requests from the Committee for documents.

41. If confirmed, how will you utilize the expertise and advice of medical professionals in the event of a public health emergency?

If confirmed, I will consult medical professionals and consider their advice in the event of a public health emergency.

42. The bird flu virus infecting people and animals across America, including in South Dakota, could cause another pandemic under you or your successor's watch. Given what you learned as Governor of South Dakota during the COVID-19 pandemic, what would you do differently in the event of another pandemic?

I am proud of my record as Governor of South Dakota during the COVID-19 pandemic. I did not shut down South Dakota, and we were the only state that did not issue a mandate to our people and never closed any businesses or churches. I studied the issue and made my decisions after extensive consultation with medical professionals and others. If confirmed, I will always consider what is in the best interests of the American people and protect the Homeland.

43. Through the BioWatch Program, the Department provides critical support to public health labs in major U.S. cities to rapidly alert law enforcement to a potential bioterrorism attack. Will you commit to working with Congress to reform the program, as the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has recommended, so that it can be better equipped to detect biological threats?

Bioterrorism poses an ever-present threat. If confirmed, I will work with Congress to ensure the Department's programs are fully equipped to fulfill its role with respect to biological threats.

44. The Department's Science and Technology Directorate manages the National Biodefense Analysis and Countermeasures Center (NBACC) which is a state-of-the-art laboratory that furthers the work of the homeland security enterprise. NBACC is the premier U.S. Government facility for identifying the most credible bioterrorism threats to Americans. How will you ensure the Department retains the capacity to identify and defend the United States against biological threats?

Biological threats pose a grave danger to our nation. The federal government must do its part to detect and defend against them. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the Department has

the resources, partnerships, and collaboration with experts in this field to fulfill its part of the government's mission to defend against biological threats.

Management, Workforce

45. What, if any, restructuring plans do you have for the Department, if confirmed?

If confirmed, I will evaluate ways to reduce redundancy and improve efficiency and effectiveness within the Department. I will also work with those tasked with protecting and defending the Homeland to identify the resources they need to succeed.

46. What do you consider to be the principal challenges in the area of human capital management facing the Department?

The Department employs over 260,000 personnel across a wide variety of agencies, components, and offices. As one might expect in such a large organization, there are numerous challenges facing employees and leaders. In particular, the Department is the product of an amalgamation of disparate organizations with their own unique purposes, structures, and cultures. The Secretary's greatest managerial challenge is to pull those pieces together, uniting them in a common mission to protect and defend the Homeland. Moreover, providing adequate training and resourcing to employees and creating an environment in which each individual has the opportunity to contribute will remain a critical focus. I look forward to collaborating with the Under Secretary for Management to meet these challenges head-on.

47. What measurements would you use to determine whether the Department is successful?

Success starts with securing our Southern Border against the illegal flow of migrants, drugs, and contraband into our country. But we must also work every day to pursue and accomplish the mission of the Department of Homeland Security. Threats are always evolving, and we must be ready to counter and prevent them to keep Americans safe. If confirmed as Secretary, I will proactively work with other executive departments and agencies, state and local officials, international partners, and Members of Congress.

48. How will you address the challenge of recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining the necessary personnel?

From Border Patrol agents to Coast Guardsmen to Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, the Department's dedicated employees work every day to keep our nation safe, our border secure, and our infrastructure protected. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Department management and Congress to ensure that operational personnel have the resources, training, and backing that they need to do their jobs effectively. I also believe it is important to highlight stories about the brave men and women who work in the Department, so that other Americans feel inspired to join them in carrying out the Department's vital mission for the country.

49. If confirmed, how will you ensure the Department is positioned to succeed beyond your tenure as Secretary? What steps will you take to prepare the office for future presidential transitions?

If confirmed, I will work to uphold the rule of law, protect our borders, and ensure the safety and security of the American people. I will continually work to set priorities, clearly communicate our mission, and to ensure the men and women across the Department have the resources, training, and tools to efficiently execute their missions. I will also work with Congress to ensure that the Department is prepared to tackle the multifaceted homeland security challenges of the future.

50. In November 2024, President-Elect Trump announced plans to create a "Department of Government Efficiency" (DOGE).

a. What is your understanding of how the DOGE will be structured and what authorities it will have?

It is my understanding that DOGE will seek to make recommendations to decrease unnecessary federal spending and bureaucracy. If confirmed, I look forward to working with DOGE.

b. If confirmed, how will you consider structural or financial reforms recommended by the DOGE?

If confirmed, I will welcome and strongly consider any structural or financial reforms to the Department recommended by DOGE, including seeking the input of career officials at the Department.

51. What steps do you believe the Department can take to ensure federal funds expended by the agency are free from duplication and waste?

If confirmed, I will work closely with the rest of the administration to identify any duplicative or wasteful spending that can be eliminated from the Department's budget. I will also foster a culture of respect for taxpayers' money in the Department. This will include scrutinizing any proposed new spending to ensure it is necessary to achieve our mandate to secure the border and keep Americans safe.

52. If confirmed, will you commit to reviewing any DHS programs that you believe could be eliminated because they are ineffective, duplicative, wasteful, unnecessary, or have outlived their purpose and report that information to Congress?

If confirmed, I will seek to identify, fix, or eliminate Department programs that are ineffective, duplicative, wasteful, or unnecessary and keep Congress apprised of relevant information.

53. A recent GAO report noted "[s]ignificant deficiencies in DHS's internal control and financial management systems have hampered its ability to effectively manage its financial operations." What do you see as the most viable path forward for the

Department to develop real-time, accurate, and comprehensive data on its finances and to use this data to inform budget decisions and resource allocation?

If confirmed, I will work closely with senior Department leadership, including the Chief Financial Officer, to develop accurate, comprehensive, and timely financial data that will allow us to quickly identify functional and geographic areas of focus that can inform budget decisions and real-time allocation of resources.

54. What is your position on how the Department should engage with its varied stakeholders, including state, local, tribal, territorial (SLTT) governments, elected officials, the private sector, faith-based and non-governmental organizations (NGO), academia, and communities?

To keep Americans safe and our borders secure, it is critical that the Department coordinate with federal, state, local, and other partners, including non-government entities. As Governor, one of my top responsibilities is managing all our state law enforcement agencies. I have encouraged these agencies to build relationships not only with other law enforcement entities, but also community organizations, such as the tribal entities that play an important role in South Dakota. As Governor I established the first-ever tribal law enforcement academy in South Dakota with the cooperation of many state and federal law enforcement agencies. This training center is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Homeland Security and is a key example of cross-agency engagement and partnership that makes everyone safer.

55. The Department has the highest number of law enforcement officers and agents across the federal government. These officers and agents are often exposed to vicarious trauma in their work but may not seek help due to stigmas and concerns about adverse actions. If confirmed, how would you ensure the Department is addressing these stigmas and working to make resources available?

I have the utmost respect for those on the frontline of defending our borders, enforcing our laws, and keeping Americans safe. If confirmed, I will look forward to hearing from Department personnel whose jobs involve dangerous and traumatic situations to understand their experiences and identify any areas where the Department can better provide them with the resources that they need.

56. What are your views regarding the importance of collective bargaining across the Department and its components? Do you commit to honoring all Department employees' collective bargaining agreements if confirmed?

If confirmed, I will support legally valid agreements with the Department.

Cybersecurity

57. In your opinion, how does cybersecurity relate to national security?

Cybersecurity is one of the greatest threats to national security we face, especially from state actors such as the People's Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Americans

cannot be safe if we are vulnerable from a cybersecurity standpoint. It is critical that we work quickly to build our cyber defense capabilities and move faster to address the ever-evolving threats we face.

58. What role should the Department and Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) play regarding cybersecurity?

The Department should partner with other federal agencies and the private sector to build cybersecurity resilience and defense, offer technical assistance and tools to identify ongoing or potential cyber risks, and share information, training, and best practices across government entities about how to prevent and mitigate cybersecurity risks. The Department should also assist in incident management and response at all levels of government and in coordination with the private sector, when appropriate.

59. Given the significant cyber incidents the last few years, what are your priorities regarding securing federal agencies from cyberattacks?

Securing federal agencies from cyberattacks requires action by multiple actors in different areas, such as information sharing and risk analysis; the development of cutting-edge network defense technologies; capacity building through training, technical assistance, and other means; and incident management and response. If confirmed, I will take a comprehensive approach to meet the multifaceted challenge posed by cyberattacks.

60. Many of the significant cyber incidents of the last few years have been perpetrated by cyber actors associated with the People's Republic of China (PRC). How do you view the countering of China, a stated priority of the new Administration, in cyberspace? How will you work with individuals and groups who are skeptical of the security threats from China?

If confirmed, I will work to partner with federal, state, and local agencies and other partners to bolster our cyber defenses and to proactively interrupt the activity of hackers and known threats to American cyber infrastructure. This includes working closely with the private sector to identify risks to critical infrastructure and support their incident response, when needed.

61. Almost all of critical infrastructure in the U.S. is owned or operated by private sector entities. How will you work with private sector entities to encourage improvements to cybersecurity?

Efforts to build up our cyber defenses will be incomplete without significant engagement with our private sector partners. If confirmed, I expect the Department to share best practices with entities in the private sector and encourage information sharing across government and private partners, including medium and small businesses who may lack the resources to invest in cyber defenses.

62. What are your thoughts on the Department's role in providing cybersecurity support to STTL government and agencies?

The Department plays an important role in providing cybersecurity support to non-federal government agencies. If confirmed, I plan to continue that role, while also ensuring that federal dollars are spent on programs critical for protecting the cyber infrastructure Americans rely on in their daily life.

63. As governor you signed into law a bill establishing a cybersecurity service initiative for the state – could you describe the importance of cybersecurity services for small towns and localities?

As Governor, I have worked to increase South Dakota's focus on cybersecurity because I understand the importance of cyber defenses for small towns and localities and the Americans that rely on them. For example, local law enforcement and healthcare agencies may have unique cyber vulnerabilities and also hold sensitive records. The Department should continue to help these and other non-federal entities develop effective cybersecurity defenses.

64. Emerging nations as well as established actors are increasing their use of ransomware to target critical infrastructure, particularly healthcare and education. How do you view CISA and DHS's role in combatting ransomware attacks?

Many ransomware attacks, especially those orchestrated by less sophisticated actors are due to human error. In fact, reports and data indicate that the overwhelming percentage of cybersecurity breaches are a result of it. As Governor, I highlighted these risks for South Dakotans and worked with federal, state, and local agencies to provide training and tools to combat these attacks by proactively identifying system weaknesses and training users to identify threats. The Department should help ensure organizations at high risk of ransomware attacks have the tools and training needed to prevent them, and when appropriate, assist with incident response.

65. The Department often works in concert with other federal agencies such as the FBI on safeguarding our critical infrastructure. If confirmed, how will you direct your staff to partner with FBI and other agencies to improve these efforts?

Like many national security issues, safeguarding our critical cyber infrastructure requires cross-agency collaboration. If confirmed, I will emphasize the importance of the Department's partnering with government agencies that have a role in this effort. The Department should continue to partner with government agencies in responding to, and defending against, cyber intrusions.

66. The Department, according to its Chief Information Officer, has an estimated 2,000 unfilled cyber jobs. How will you make the Department a federal leader for skilled cyber personnel? What are your plans for retaining current cyber personnel at the Department?

If I am confirmed, the Department's recruitment and retention of qualified cyber personnel will receive close attention. The Department should ensure it is not missing out on talented, skilled individuals simply because they have not followed a "traditional" path in their careers or education.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

67. The Department has implemented robust AI governance practices that promote responsible use of the technology. What are your views on the regulation and oversight of AI to enable access to the benefits of this technology while mitigating its risks?

As with all new technologies, risks associated with AI must be identified and managed without stifling innovation and investment. Coordination with public and private stakeholders on AI issues and cooperation with, rather than resistance to, private industry will help the Department avoid inappropriate regulatory overreach. Working together, we can ensure that America remains a leader in AI while smartly mitigating risks as they emerge.

68. What role do you see the Department having in preventing artificial intelligence tools from being used to put Americans in danger, such as through the development of novel chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons?

I support the Department acting decisively to keep Americans safe from our adversaries who would misuse AI tools to develop weapons of mass destruction. As Governor, I took action to protect South Dakotans from hostile foreign governments interfering in the technology sector by banning state agencies from doing business with technology or telecommunications companies tied to China, Iran, North Korea, Russia, Cuba, or Venezuela.

69. As the Department integrates AI tools into operations, how will you ensure that the privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties of Americans are protected?

As hostile actors advance their AI capabilities, integration of AI tools into the Department's operations is important to ensure the Department can fulfill its mission to protect the Homeland. American companies are at the cutting edge of AI development, and the Department should collaborate with industry to ensure the Department is not only adopting AI technologies when appropriate, but also integrating technologies into the Department's operations in ways that protect the civil liberties of Americans.

Leadership in emerging technologies has been a priority for me as Governor. Support for and collaboration with emerging technologies can also ensure technologies like AI are developed and used responsibly. For example, I signed a bill to update South Dakota's laws against child sexual abuse images to address those created by AI, including deepfakes. I also signed a bill to establish a Center for Quantum Information Science and Technology to deepen research into quantum computing and ensure its applicability in multiple sectors, including AI.

Misinformation, Disinformation, and Tech Censorship

70. Please define in your own words 'misinformation', 'disinformation' and 'protected speech'.

These terms mean different things to different people. If I am confirmed, I will seek to uphold the Constitution and the rule of law to protect the American people.

71. Do you believe the Department or any of its components have infringed on protected speech? Please explain why or why not.

If confirmed, I will study this issue and will seek to hold accountable any Department employee found to have misused government power to infringe on Americans' constitutional rights.

72. Should the Department or any of its components be involved in censoring Americans' constitutionally protected speech? Should the Department or any of its components have role in labeling Americans' constitutionally protected speech as misinformation or disinformation?

The Department's mission is to safeguard Americans, and it must work to achieve that mission within the bounds of the Constitution and the rule of law.

73. Our foreign adversaries use social media platforms to espouse wide reaching mis and disinformation, striving to sow division among Americans. If confirmed, how will you balance the need to protect Americans' rights while still ensuring our adversaries are not influencing our citizens and our national debates in a malign manner?

Adversarial threats continue to evolve and expand, and so too must the Department's capabilities to deter and prevent those threats within the framework of protecting Americans' constitutional rights. I believe that when leaders overstep their constitutional authority, that is when we lose our country and freedoms. If confirmed, I will seek to ensure that all Department personnel understand our solemn duty to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States.

74. Should CISA or any of the Department's components work with social media companies to discuss moderating content, which may include constitutionally protected speech?

The Department's mission is to safeguard Americans, and it must work to achieve that mission within the bounds of the Constitution and the rule of law.

75. In *Missouri v. Biden*, the district court pointed out that the Department had outlined its "strategy and priorities" to "target 'inaccurate information' on a wide range of topics, including the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic, the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines, racial justice, the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, and the return of U.S. Support of Ukraine." Do you believe the Department has constitutional authority to police information stemming from any of these categories? Based on your understanding, where are the limits to what federal agencies can and cannot do regarding protected speech?

The Department's mission is to safeguard Americans, and it must work to achieve that mission within the bounds of the Constitution and the rule of law.

76. A 2023 Brennan Center for Justice report found that the Department used twelve programs to track and monitor political speech protected under the First Amendment made by American citizens. As Secretary, will you commit to reviewing all programs and ensuring that the Department does not infringe on the constitutional rights of Americans?

If confirmed, I will work to ensure all Department programs are in line with the Constitution and the rule of law.

Intelligence & Information Sharing

77. As the Department's primary intelligence community component, the Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) is permitted to do overt collections, including on U.S. persons. Do you believe it should continue to have this authority to collect intelligence on Americans?

Intelligence collection and analysis are important to be able to help prevent and disrupt threats to the American people, and all such efforts must be conducted within the bounds of the Constitution and the rule of law.

78. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) implement multiple and layered security and other screenings, but do not currently assess their overall impact on individuals or their efficacy. If confirmed, will you work with the Committee to increase transparency and accountability for these different programs?

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that all Department programs are lawful, effective, transparent, and accountable.

79. The DHS Traveler Redress Inquiry Program (DHS-TRIP) is currently the primary mechanism for individuals to seek redress not only with travel issues but also for other vetting issues. However, the Committee has heard from stakeholders that the system does not work and identified in a Committee report that reforming DHS-TRIP is central to building trust in DHS's screening systems. Do you commit to working to reform DHS-TRIP?

If confirmed, I will work to promote effectiveness and trust in the Department's programs, including pushing for any necessary reforms to traveler-related programs.

Border Security & Immigration

80. Under the Biden administration, there have been over 10.3 million illegal Southwest border crossings, including 387 individuals on the terrorist watchlist. How do you plan to address this as Secretary?

If confirmed, I will work to secure our border so that we can stop the flow of illegal immigrants, drugs, and crime into our country. Securing the border will also help to combat human trafficking and prevent terrorists from having easy access into the United States. If confirmed, I will work to monitor, prevent, and eliminate terrorist threats our country faces. To achieve border security, the Department must provide those on the frontlines of protecting our borders with the resources they need.

81. In the 115th Congress, you cosponsored a bill that would have required the Secretary of Homeland Security, before deploying tactical infrastructure, to consult with the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Governors for each state on the southern and northern land borders, other States, local governments, Indian tribes, representatives of the U.S. Border Patrol and U.S. Customs and Border Protection, relevant Federal, State, local and tribal agencies that have jurisdiction on the southern land border or in the maritime environment along the southern border, and private property owners in the U.S. to minimize the impact on the environment, culture, commerce, quality of life for the communities and residents located near the sites at which physical barriers, tactical infrastructure, and technology are to be constructed. If confirmed, how would you ensure that appropriate stakeholders are consulted before proceeding with the deployment of infrastructure along our nation's borders?

I believe coordination with federal, state, local, and other partners is critical to keep Americans safe and our borders secure. As Governor of South Dakota, I learned first-hand how to engage with a large variety of stakeholders on national security issues. If confirmed, I would take a similar approach to ensure that stakeholders are consulted as security infrastructure is deployed along our nation's borders.

82. Congress has defined "operational control" as the "prevention of all unlawful entries into the United States, including entries by terrorists, other unlawful aliens, instruments of terrorism, narcotics, and other contraband." Do you believe the next Administration can achieve "operational control" of our nation's borders, according to that definition?

Illegal immigration threatens public safety, drains the treasury, undermines American workers, and burdens schools and hospitals. If I am confirmed, I will work with other relevant federal agencies to secure our nation's borders.

83. In 2018, you recognized the troubling impact of family separation policies but did not condemn the Zero Tolerance policy. Will you disavow or support a return to the Department's so-call "zero tolerance policy" from the first Trump administration?

If confirmed, I will work to protect the American people, and a key component of doing so is securing our borders, in line with all applicable provisions in the Constitution and the law. I fully support ending catch-and-release and eliminating asylum fraud, among other actions, and will work with others in the administration to secure the border.

84. As of 2024, over 1,000 children are still separated from their families due to the Zero Tolerance policy. Do you plan to continue reunification of these families uphold the settlement reached in *Ms. L., et al. v. ICE, et al.*?

If confirmed, I will uphold the rule of law, including applicable court orders.

85. If confirmed as Secretary, how will you prevent future separations in compliance with the Department's obligations under the *Ms. L., et al. v. ICE, et al.*, settlement agreement?

If confirmed, I will uphold the rule of law, including applicable court orders.

86. The Department is required to report on instances of family separations, including when the basis for the separation is based on information obtained by a foreign government. The Department has previously failed to comply with this reporting requirement. Will you commit to fulfilling this reporting requirement?

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department complies with applicable law, including reporting requirements.

87. What is your understanding of the distinct missions and responsibilities of the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) and DHS with respect to unaccompanied children?

As part of its border security responsibility, the Department apprehends and detains those who enter the country illegally. I understand that HHS's Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) coordinates care and placement of unaccompanied children in appropriate custodial settings.

88. Now that the Department has reached 20 years, we have entered a period of increased retirement eligibility for CBP Officers and Border Patrol Agents. If confirmed, how would you ensure that CBP can retain personnel and recruit, hire, and train qualified personnel?

The Department's fundamental purpose is to secure the Homeland and keep Americans safe. If confirmed, I will seek to invest in hiring and retaining the best personnel for that mission, including CBP officers and Border Patrol agents. I will also work with those tasked with protecting the Homeland to identify the resources they need. I will meet with those deployed on the borders and in the interior to understand their needs and identify steps the Department can take to recruit and retain the best personnel.

89. CBP has seen a significant increase in de minimis shipments, which enter the U.S. duty-free and with less information than other types of shipments. This pathway has been exploited by bad actors counterfeiting goods, trafficking drugs like fentanyl, and engaging in other illicit activities. If confirmed, how would you plan to address challenges like this?

Technology should be used to help the Department address the constantly changing challenges posed by bad actors. For instance, I understand that new nonintrusive detection tools and data collection initiatives have allowed CBP to better focus its resources on

suspicious packages and bad actors. If confirmed, I plan to continue these and similar efforts.

a. In September 2024, the Biden Administration announced actions to address de minimis exploitation. Have you reviewed these actions and if confirmed, would you plan to continue such efforts?

If confirmed, I will work with the Department to block illegal shipments into the United States.

90. If confirmed, do you commit to getting the U.S. Border Patrol to complete and have independently validated, a personnel requirements model, which has been required by Congress but has not been completed to date?

If confirmed, I will work to ensure Department complies with all applicable law.

91. Do you believe that our nation's ports of entry have adequate resources and staffing to both efficiently facilitate the flow of legitimate trade and travel and prevent the illegal flow of drugs, contraband, and individuals posing security threats into this country?

If confirmed, I plan to review resources and staffing at our borders, including ports of entry, to ensure they are appropriate in numbers and capabilities.

92. Congress has provided significant funding for technology at and between ports of entry to scan cargo entering the country and Increase situational awareness along the border. However, in some cases, CBP has been slow to get these tools in place or technology has been inoperable. If confirmed, how would you ensure that the Department is effectively utilizing the funding Congress provides to put these tools to use?

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department uses available technology and other resources provided by Congress, and will seek to ensure that resources are used effectively and efficiently to achieve the Department's mission.

93. If confirmed, are you committed to ensuring the U.S. fulfills its obligations to outfit and staff the U.S. port of entry at the Gordie Howe International Bridge, which is expected to open for operations in 2025?

If confirmed, I will work to ensure the Department appropriately staffs all ports of entry, including the Gordie Howe International Bridge.

94. Do you agree that the U.S. has a legal and moral obligation to provide asylum and humanitarian protection to those fleeing persecution?

The federal government must follow and enforce all applicable law.

95. Will you commit to ensuring that asylum seekers are afforded due process, humane treatment, and timely adjudication of their claims in compliance with U.S. and international laws?

If confirmed, I will seek to ensure that the Department carries out its mission in accordance with the Constitution and applicable law.

96. You indicated you were not supportive of the bipartisan border security bill led by Sens. Lankford, Sinema, and Murphy in 2024 (S.4361).

a. Please explain why you opposed this bill.

With the influx of illegal immigrants in recent years, we have seen a spike in drugs, crime, violence, and human trafficking that are tearing apart American communities. It is critical that any new laws focus on securing the border and stopping illegal immigration.

b. Do you believe that bipartisan compromise is necessary to enact meaningful immigration and border security reforms?

Leadership is necessary to enact meaningful border security and immigration reforms, and I certainly hope those on both sides of the aisle will support legislation that secures the border and protects the American people.

97. The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution guarantees that every child born "within the jurisdiction of the United States" is a U.S. citizen, regardless of their parent's immigration or citizenship status. If you are asked by the White House to take away birthplace-based citizenship from children born in the United States, without the passage of a new constitutional amendment, how will you respond?

The Fourteenth Amendment states: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside." I am committed to upholding the Constitution and the rule of law.

98. Should a person's religion be used in any manner to determine whether that person is eligible to enter the United States? Why or why not?

I fully support appropriate, thorough vetting that complies with the Constitution and applicable law.

99. For decades, the U.S. has served as a global leader in the resettlement of refugees. Refugee resettlement has historically been a bipartisan issue and is a "critical pillar of our national security and foreign policy." At a time when we are facing the highest levels of displacement on record, President-Elect Trump has promised to halt refugees from coming to the United States. How do you plan to carry out this directive while adhering to U.S. and international laws?

If I am confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department achieves its mission of protecting the Homeland in accordance with the Constitution and the rule of law.

100. President-Elect Trump has vowed to reinstate his travel ban that barred many people from predominantly Muslim countries from entering the United States. If confirmed, would you support the President-Elect in re-implementing this ban?

If I am confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department achieves its mission of protecting the Homeland in accordance with the Constitution and the rule of law.

101. Millions of individuals living in the U.S. under programs like Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) face uncertainty about their future. Will you commit to working with Congress and within your authority to protect these populations from deportation while legislative solutions are pursued?

If I am confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department achieves its mission of protecting the Homeland in accordance with the Constitution and the rule of law.

102. Will you continue to ensure DACA renewal applications are processed – as required by court decisions – while the litigation makes its way through the court system?

If confirmed, I will work within my authority to enforce the laws enacted by Congress and to abide by federal court decisions applicable to the Department.

103. Do you believe that noncitizens have the right to counsel in their immigration proceedings?

If confirmed, I will consult with Department attorneys and the Department of Justice, as appropriate, on questions of law.

104. How will the Department ensure that attorneys, whether private, government-funded legal counsel, or pro bono, can regularly and reliably speak to their clients to present a robust defense in immigration court or immigration proceedings such as USCIS interviews or asylum interviews?

I am committed to upholding the Constitution and the rule of law. If confirmed, I will ensure that Department policies and procedures meet Constitutional protections and prevailing legal requirements, including those related to legal representation.

105. As Governor of South Dakota, you have on multiple occasions acknowledged the important roles that immigrants play in supporting your state's economy, particularly through the H-2 and J-1 visa programs. What steps will you ensure that the legal immigration system will run efficiently and effectively to ensure that U.S. businesses can get the workers they need in a timely manner?

The efficient and effective management of legal immigration is important to the economic wellbeing of our country. As the Governor of South Dakota and a former rancher myself, I understand the importance of seasonal labor in support of agricultural production and livestock production, among many other industries across our great nation. If I am

confirmed, proper management and enforcement of the legal immigration system will be a priority in the Department.

106. Will you support continued expansion of the H-2 program through supplemental H-2 visas?

If I am confirmed, I will seek to ensure that the Department fulfills its role in effectively and efficiently administering the legal immigration system.

107. Do you have plans to use Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or other non-immigration DHS agencies to support immigration arrests and deportations? What factors will you consider in determining whether to do so?

If I am confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department achieves its mission of protecting the Homeland in accordance with the Constitution and the rule of law.

108. President-Elect Trump has indicated he intends to use the U.S. military to support immigration enforcement.

a. What is your understanding of the specific roles and responsibilities the military will be given in immigration enforcement?

The President is the Commander-in-Chief of the United States military. I cannot speak to President-Elect Trump's work with appropriate military leaders. If I am confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department achieves its mission of protecting the Homeland in accordance with the Constitution and the rule of law.

b. What limits do you support on military involvement in immigration enforcement?

The President is the Commander-in-Chief of the United States military. I cannot speak to President-Elect Trump's work with appropriate military leaders. If I am confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department achieves its mission of protecting the Homeland in accordance with the Constitution and the rule of law.

109. Do you plan to ask state governors to mobilize their National Guard units to conduct immigration arrests inside of the United States?

If I am confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department achieves its mission of protecting the Homeland in accordance with the Constitution and the rule of law.

110. Will you seek the state governors' assistance in mobilizing their National Guard units to build large-scale detention facilities across the United States?

If I am confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department achieves its mission of protecting the Homeland in accordance with the Constitution and the rule of law.

111. For years, the Department has refrained from taking immigration enforcement actions at or near protected areas, such as schools, hospitals, places of worship, and social

services establishments, to ensure these locations remain safe and accessible for all individuals. Will you commit to upholding and enforcing these protections?

If I am confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department achieves its mission of protecting the Homeland in accordance with the Constitution and the rule of law.

112. Will you refuse FEMA or other non-immigration Departmental resources to states and localities that refuse to participate in mass deportations?

If I am confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department achieves its mission of protecting the Homeland in accordance with the Constitution and the rule of law. I will also work to ensure that the Department uses resources as appropriate and required by law.

113. Paramilitary and militia groups along the border frequently deprive lawful immigrants of basic civil and human rights, as well as Constitutional protections. Will you commit to not allowing DHS employees (CBP, USCIS, ICE, etc.) to collaborate with paramilitary and militia groups along the border?

If I am confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department achieves its mission of protecting the Homeland in accordance with the Constitution and the rule of law.

114. In recent years, there have been several deaths of children in CBP custody. As Secretary, what improvements and changes will you implement to ensure that both unaccompanied and accompanied children receive adequate access to healthcare while in DHS custody?

The Department should provide appropriate care for those in its custody. The Department also must secure the border and stop illegal immigration. If confirmed, I will work every day to achieve that goal.

115. Do you believe that undocumented migrants should be returned to countries to which the U.S. does not have extradition agreements? Why or why not?

If I am confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department achieves its mission of protecting the Homeland in accordance with the Constitution and the rule of law.

116. While the Department of Homeland Security plays a significant role in stopping the flow of drugs like fentanyl into our communities by detecting and interdicting drugs at ports of entry, it is also critical to address the overall fentanyl supply chain. If confirmed, how would you work with other Federal agencies, international partners, and private industry to ensure we are stopping fentanyl further up the supply chain?

The flow of illegal drugs, particularly fentanyl, has resulted in a drug addiction crisis across our nation. These drugs have also perpetuated violence and corruption in American communities. If confirmed, I will work closely with other federal agencies, international partners, and private industry to help coordinate efforts to identify, interdict, disrupt, and dismantle drug trafficking. I will make this a high priority for the Department and all its

components. I will also work to maximize the extent to which Department components share information and coordinate with international partners, as permitted by law.

117. In addition to bringing drugs and other contraband into the U.S., transnational criminal organizations also rely on the outbound flow of cash and weapons to fuel their activities internationally. If confirmed, how would you prioritize outbound inspections to address this flow?

Transnational criminal organizations are perpetuating violence, crime, corruption, drug addiction, and misery across the United States, and they must be stopped. If confirmed, I will work closely with senior Department leadership and other federal agencies to ensure that law enforcement authorities have the resources and strategies to combat these transnational criminal organizations, including the seizure of outbound investment, weapons, and other material support.

118. What are your views on whether fentanyl should be considered a weapon of mass destruction? What is informing those views?

Fentanyl is a grave threat to the American people and all legally available options should be considered to combat stop illegal trafficking.

119. Do you believe a warrant should be required to search the contents of an American citizen's electronic device at ports of entry?

If confirmed, I will consult with Department attorneys and the Department of Justice, as appropriate, on questions of law.

120. There have been proposals to separate Homeland Security Investigations from U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement. What is your view on such proposals?

If confirmed, I will seek to ensure that the Department is effective in achieving its mission, including coordinating with Congress on any changes that might require congressional action.

Transportation Security

121. On May 7, 2025, the Department will begin enforcing the REAL ID Act by requiring U.S. travelers to possess a REAL ID compliant document to board domestic flights and access certain federal facilities. If confirmed, do you intend on maintaining the May 7, 2025 deadline? What steps would you take to ensure the Department is ready to enforce the requirements of the REAL ID Act? How will you work with stakeholder groups to ensure the public is prepared to comply with the requirements of the Act?

If I am confirmed, I will seek to ensure that the Department works with stakeholders to implement the REAL ID Act.

122. In your view, is aviation security screening at airport security checkpoints an inherently governmental function?

Aviation security screening at airports is entrusted by law to the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). If confirmed, my focus will be on ensuring the TSA performs that function effectively and efficiently.

123. Last year, Congress voted to align TSA employee compensation with the federal workforce and expand collective bargaining rights to Transportation Security Officers (TSOs). If confirmed, will you support collective bargaining rights for TSOs?

If confirmed, I will support legally valid agreements with the Department.

Decade of Sports

124. The U.S. will be hosting several international sports events in the coming decade, including the FIFA World Cup in 2026 and Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2028. If you are confirmed, what steps will you [take] to ensure the Department is prepared to support our federal, state, and local partners in securing these high-profile events?

Preparation for the high-profile, large-scale sporting events coming to the United States over the next four years will require significant coordination between federal, state, and local actors. If confirmed, I will work closely with partners across all levels of government and in the private sector to secure these events. In addition to this coordination, if confirmed, I will ensure the Department has the resources to perform its core functions for these types of events, which can include providing guidance and expertise to state and local law enforcement or transit agencies, defending against cyber attacks, providing Department resources to protect against nuclear, chemical, or biological attacks, and promoting information sharing with state and local agencies.

125. If confirmed, what policies and procedures will you put forward for the World Cup 2026 and the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2028 to ensure timely travel for accredited individuals to the U.S. (including expedited waiver processing) as well as expedient entry at ports of entry?

If confirmed, I look forward to the Department doing its part to facilitate the secure hosting of athletes and other representatives from across the world. If confirmed, I will work closely with DHS leadership, as well as leaders across federal, state, and local governments to ensure that we are allowing for timely travel of accredited individuals while also safeguarding against threats to the Homeland.

U.S. Coast Guard

126. Like the other military services, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) has faced recruitment challenges. This led to USCG making operational changes, including closing or reducing operations at stations across the country. As Secretary, how would you ensure that USCG has the resources it needs to recruit and retain personnel?

The U.S. Coast Guard serves a vital role in protecting the American people. The Coast Guard helps secure our maritime borders, aid vessels in distress, safeguard fisheries and other natural resources, protect harbors and other critical infrastructure, and enforce the law. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to ensure the Coast Guard has the resources it needs to succeed.

127. Leadership of the Department and the U.S. Coast Guard failed to notify Congress about the investigation titled "Operation Fouled Anchor" and its findings for years following the investigation. If confirmed, do you commit to providing Congress with information related to such investigations?

If confirmed, in accordance with relevant guidance from the Department of Justice, I will comply with reasonable requests for information from any duly constituted committee of Congress. If confirmed, I will not tolerate sexual assault or misconduct, or cover-ups after the fact, at the Department.

128. The U.S. is well behind other nations in icebreaking capacity. If confirmed, how would you ensure that USCG is keeping up with shipbuilding needs? Given the lack of icebreaking capacity, how would you address capability gaps in the Arctic region?

The United States is an Arctic nation and requires the necessary capabilities to operate in the Arctic to protect its interests. President-Elect Trump emphasized the development of icebreaking capabilities during his first term, and if confirmed I look forward to working with Congress to ensure that the Coast Guard is adequately resourced to meet its mission in the Arctic.

129. There have been proposals to remove the USCG from the Department. Do you support moving the USCG to another department? If confirmed, how would you consider such proposals?

If confirmed, I will seek to ensure that the Department is effective in achieving its mission, including coordinating with Congress on any changes that might require congressional action.

Preventing Terrorism and Enhancing Security

130. What do you consider the most pressing terrorist threat to the nation and how do you plan to address it?

The American people face myriad terrorist threats from a host of hostile actors, including nation-states, independent groups, and radicalized individuals both at home and abroad. The most pressing threat is our Southern Border. If confirmed, I will seek to secure the border and deny terrorists entry into our country.

131. The nation faces a wide range of threats, but the Department has finite resources to address them. If confirmed, what principles will guide your decision-making regarding the use of risk-analysis and risk-based resource allocation to set priorities within the

Department? How will you determine if some threats or events require enhanced emphasis and investment or have already received sufficient focus?

If confirmed, I intend for the Department to take a risk-based, intelligence-driven approach to prioritizing resources, to cooperate with other federal agencies to avoid duplication of effort, and to coordinate with state and local authorities to identify risks and focus resources to keep the American people safe.

132. Do you consider domestic terrorism to be a threat to Americans? If yes, how do you intend to address domestic terrorism? If not, why not?

Recent events in New Orleans demonstrate that terrorism continues to present a danger to the United States. If confirmed, I will work closely with federal, state, and local authorities to identify and address threats – whether homegrown or from abroad – before they endanger the American people.

133. Since FY21, DHS and FBI have been required to provide Congress with data about domestic terrorist incidents and resources allocated to this threat. With the expiration of this requirement, do you commit to continue to provide the Department relevant information to Congress at our request?

If confirmed, in accordance with relevant guidance from the Department of Justice, I will comply with reasonable requests for information from any duly constituted committee of Congress.

134. Although it is not an authorized position, most Administrations have appointed counterterrorism coordinators to ensure operational coordination between components. Do you plan to appoint a counterterrorism coordinator and maintain a counterterrorism coordinator's office to coordinate operational counterterrorism activities across the Department? If not, how do you intend to ensure coordination between components on counterterrorist operations?

If confirmed, I will evaluate the Department's coordination of its counterterrorism activities, including the use of a counterterrorism coordinator.

135. What is your assessment of the threat and our ability to mitigate the threat of the acquisition and use of Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) materials? Please describe your priorities regarding CBRN-related threats, and how the CWMD Office should address them?

Biological threats pose a grave danger to our nation. The same is true of chemical, radiological, and nuclear threats. There is no doubt that our adversaries are seeking to acquire CBRN materials, and if they fall into the wrong hands, the consequences could be catastrophic. Our nation must be prepared to identify and defend against these threats. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the Department is able to fulfill its part of the government's mission to defend against CBRN threats.

136. The previous Trump Administration established the Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention grant program, which is funded by Congress and now administered by FEMA on behalf of the Center for Prevention, Programs, and Partnerships. Do you intend to continue to administer these grants?

If confirmed, I will assess the Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention grant program. Grants awarded by the Department must advance the Department's mission to protect the Homeland and be managed effectively and efficiently.

137. What do you think is the role of the Department in addressing transnational repression by foreign actors in the U.S.?

There has been a recent trend of unsettling reports of foreign adversaries attempting to conduct law-enforcement operations and political repression outside their borders – particularly in countries where political freedoms are constitutionally protected. If confirmed, I expect the Department to coordinate with the Department of Justice, the Department of State, and the Intelligence Community to dissuade states from engaging in such conduct, apprehend foreign actors operating illegally in the United States, and protect Americans.

138. Congress authorized DHS and DOJ to protect certain assets and facilities from potential threat posed by unmanned aircraft systems (UAS). What is your assessment of the current threat posed by UAS to large public gatherings, airports, and critical infrastructure facilities? What steps would you take to safeguard these locations and facilities from UAS threats?

If confirmed, I will work to ensure the Department is employing the resources necessary to detect and neutralize UAS threats, which are rapidly evolving.

139. In the last few years, there have been escalating threats against election workers, elections infrastructure, political campaigns, and politicians. What do you believe is the Department's role in addressing these threats?

The Department is responsible for protecting the Homeland and American people, including from those targeting our political process. If I am confirmed as Secretary, the Department will work closely with federal, state, and local partners to help safeguard America.

140. The intelligence community has assessed that foreign actors, including Russia, China, and Iran, have all attempted to interfere in U.S. elections for the last few cycles. What do you believe is the Department's role in protecting our elections from foreign influence?

The Department is charged with protecting the Homeland and safeguarding the American people. That includes detecting and countering malign foreign actors who seek to harm the United States.

Privacy, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties

141. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that Department activities undergo a privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties review before being implemented?

The Department's mission is to safeguard Americans, and it must work to achieve that mission within the bounds of the Constitution and the rule of law. If confirmed, I will seek to ensure that the Department follows the Constitution and all applicable laws.

142. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that all recommendations made by the DHS Privacy Officer are reviewed, responded to, if necessary, and, unless the agency justifies its disagreements with the recommendations, implemented to the fullest extent possible within a reasonable time period?

Taking a responsible approach to privacy is critical for the Department to be effective, comply with the law, and maintain the trust of the American people. If confirmed, I will ensure recommendations by the DHS Privacy Officer are duly considered.

143. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that all recommendations made by the DHS Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Officer are reviewed, responded to, if necessary, and, unless the agency justifies its disagreements with the recommendations, implemented to the fullest extent possible within a reasonable time period?

The Department's mission is to safeguard Americans, and it must work to achieve that mission within the bounds of the Constitution and the rule of law. If confirmed, I will seek to ensure that the Department follows the Constitution and all applicable laws.

144. What is your stance on the use of facial recognition technology by the federal government?

Facial recognition technology, as with the collection and use of other biometric data, brings both risks and benefits that need to be carefully weighed. The Department should assess whether and how technology can help the Department more effectively and efficiently protect the Homeland in accordance with the Constitution and all applicable laws.

145. What is your view of DHS Directive Number: 026-11: Use of Face Recognition and Face Capture Technologies? Do you anticipate making changes to the Department's face recognition and face comparison technology use policies and, if so, what would they be?

The use of biometric technologies, like facial recognition and face capture, brings both risks and benefits that need to be carefully weighed. The Department should assess whether and how technology can help the Department more effectively and efficiently protect the Homeland in accordance with the Constitution and all applicable laws.

146. What will your priorities be with regards to the use of biometrics by the Department and its components?

The use of biometric technologies, like facial recognition and face capture, brings both risks and benefits that need to be carefully weighed. The Department should assess whether and how technology can help the Department more effectively and efficiently protect the Homeland in accordance with the Constitution and all applicable laws.

147. Do you commit that in all instances in which DHS law enforcement or contractors are deployed to assist the Federal Protective Service with its mission, they will wear a consistent uniform for cross-designation operations that identifies their affiliation to the Department, the component they represent, and their name?

The Department's mission is to safeguard Americans, and it must work to achieve that mission within the bounds of the Constitution and the rule of law. If confirmed, I will seek to ensure that the Department follows the Constitution and all applicable laws.

148. Under what circumstances would you request the Attorney General, Defense Department, and/or National Guard to assist law enforcement in policing protests?

The Department's mission is to safeguard Americans, and it must work to achieve that mission within the bounds of the Constitution and the rule of law. If confirmed, I would seek to work with other relevant federal, state, and local partners as appropriate and lawful based on the facts and circumstances of each case.

149. What kind of reviews of Departmental programs do you plan on initiating in your first year? What kind of transparency and oversight do you expect to see of programs that may include activities related to protected speech?

The Department has numerous agencies under its umbrella; each has myriad programs and processes. If confirmed, I will seek to promote transparency and accountability throughout the Department, including with respect to activities implicating protected speech.

150. Are you aware of proposals to shut down the DHS Privacy Office and Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Office and put both Offices under a political appointee in the DHS Office of General Counsel? Do you have any plans to eliminate these offices and reassign the Privacy Officer and Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Officer? If not, what are your plans for these offices?

I am not familiar with the details of any proposals to shut down the DHS Privacy Office or Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Office. If confirmed, I expect to assess the capabilities and effectiveness of the Department's various offices. I look forward to working with relevant stakeholders, including Congress, as part of this process.

Federal Emergency Management

151. If confirmed, what will be your immediate and longer-term priorities for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)?

FEMA must be able to quickly and effectively help the American people in disaster situations. FEMA's emergency response capability remains both an immediate and long-term

priority. Rapid relief requires extensive coordination between federal, state, and local partners. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing and overseeing the agency's activities in pursuit of that goal, drawing on my experience in overseeing South Dakota's response to multiple natural disasters, including in coordination with FEMA.

152. Do you believe it is required under the law for the Department to administer all laws and funding passed by Congress, even if you may personally disagree with it?

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department complies with applicable law.

153. How do you evaluate the current state of national preparedness for emergencies and disasters, including the capabilities of individuals and communities?

There is always room for improvement when it comes to emergency preparedness. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Department's leadership, as well as our federal, state, local, and other partners, to increase national preparedness based on lessons learned and expected risks moving forward.

154. Do you believe that man-made climate change has contributed to the growth in the frequency, magnitude, and financial impact of natural disasters in recent years? If yes, please explain how FEMA can use this information to improve preparedness. If no, please explain why not.

It is my view that FEMA must take an evidence-based approach to improving preparedness for natural disasters. That includes paying close attention to weather patterns and trends. For example, in my role as Governor of South Dakota, I have relied extensively upon the analyses of state agencies and federal partners to assess projections regarding precipitation levels and river flows in connection with the unprecedented flooding in South Dakota in 2024.

155. The largest share of the Department's budget authority is provided to FEMA to carry out its mission, which includes providing grants to state and local governments. What are your initial recommendations for improving the Department's and FEMA's management of its grant programs?

In managing its grant programs, it is critical for FEMA to listen to and collaborate with state and local leaders, who are often well positioned to assess the risks and needs of their communities. If confirmed, I will work to ensure FEMA's grant programs are effective, timely, and efficient. In particular, FEMA and the Department must stand ready to rapidly respond to natural disasters when they occur. Close collaboration and partnership are essential to that goal.

156. As the nation responds to more disasters every year, do you believe it is imperative to invest in the suite of resilience programs at FEMA to reduce the costs and impacts of natural hazards, including the new Safeguarding Tomorrow Revolving Loan Fund?

FEMA programs that support preparedness and resilience are essential to its mission, particularly when they take into account the specific needs of our state and local partners. It is also essential to provide oversight, accountability, and proper management to grants.

157. FEMA has traditionally fallen short on its recruitment goals in order to make sure it has the workforce necessary to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. If confirmed, what will you do to help FEMA to make recruitment and retention of staff a priority?

I have found that one way to address shortages in a government agency's workforce is to ensure existing personnel have the resources, training, and backing that they need to do their jobs effectively, which can significantly help recruitment and retention. If confirmed, I will work to ensure FEMA, like all components of the Department, is able to recruit and retain the personnel they need.

158. In the past, FEMA has been criticized for not providing adequate assistance to underserved communities. Do you believe FEMA should continue its efforts to better provide assistance to underserved communities?

Every community in the United States deserves rapid and effective assistance. That understanding should infuse FEMA's activities, if it does not already.

159. If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that there is leadership appointed to offices within FEMA to limit the need for individuals working in acting capacities?

I believe that the Department and its components, including FEMA, need effective leaders to accomplish their missions. If confirmed, I will work to ensure such leaders are put in place.

160. If confirmed, do you commit to administering federal disaster assistance without regard to political affiliation?

Politics should never dictate the provision of disaster assistance. As Governor, I work for all South Dakotans regardless of political affiliation and, if confirmed, I look forward to doing the same as Secretary.

161. Given the increasingly complex and evolving threat landscape, which includes an increase in threats to houses of worship, universities, community centers and other nonprofits, do you support increasing resources to the Nonprofit Security Grant Program and other FEMA preparedness grants?

If confirmed, I will assess the Department's grant programs to ensure they are appropriately funded and administered to serve the best interests of homeland security.

162. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring the head of FEMA has a direct line to the President in advising on disaster response and recovery matters?

If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the head of FEMA. I will consult with the White House to ensure appropriate reporting lines are in place.

163. During your time as governor, what have you learned as you have led disaster response operations?

There is something to learn from every disaster response. South Dakota endured several natural disasters during my time as Governor. In 2024, I witnessed the destruction caused by the unprecedented flooding that devastated many of our communities in South Dakota. The state benefitted significantly from a robust mitigation plan. But as with any natural disaster, we had to be prepared for unpredictability – for example, rapidly changing water levels on the Big Sioux River that impacted projections, at times on a minute-by-minute basis. That unpredictability demanded flexibility and efficiency, such as the quick construction of levees to stem the flow. I learned several important lessons from those experiences, including that effective preparation requires learning from the past. And when future disasters inevitably happen, federal, state, and local partners must stand ready to work together.

164. If confirmed, will you support and advocate for FEMA's role as disaster relief coordinator for the entire federal government?

FEMA plays an essential role in federal disaster relief efforts. If confirmed, I will support the role that maximizes the federal government's ability to respond to natural disasters.

165. As Governor of South Dakota, you have been criticized for the preparations for and response to the McCook Lake flood in June 2024. Specifically, you declined to send the National Guard to assist, and you waited more than a month to ask President Biden for a disaster declaration from FEMA. Can you describe what actions you took to prepare for and help people cope with the flood? Do you have any lessons learned?

I am proud of how South Dakotans responded to the catastrophic and unprecedented floods of 2024. My heart goes out to the families who were affected. We demonstrated resilience in the face of a 1,000-year event that impacted 25 counties and caused untold destruction and devastation. North Sioux City had an existing mitigation plan for precisely this kind of event. That plan, which contemplated the strategic construction of emergency levees, was put in place well before the last flooding event. It helped ensure that our local and state partners were able to respond as effectively as possible given available information, and when successfully implemented, it prevented the entirety of North Sioux City from going underwater. Our precipitation and water level projections often changed throughout the event – sometimes, within minutes. The projections from the National Weather Service and the Army Corps of Engineers were often wrong – in fact, it was a state employee within my Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources who provided the most accurate projections on the flooding. At times, the forecast data had changed even by the time it was announced to the public. When the Big Sioux River crested earlier and at a higher level than projections indicated – indeed, the highest level ever recorded by more than seven feet – we promptly dispatched emergency responders to go door-to-door. We deployed Conservation Officers from the Department of Game, Fish & Parks to assist in rescue operations. We also provided Highway Patrol troopers to assist with security. After the water levels subsided, it was an enormous undertaking to assess the damage in any one of the impacted counties, let alone statewide. For months we worked with families, local government officials, and FEMA to assess the damage and piece our communities back together.

U.S. Secret Service

166. Will you commit to providing the Committee unredacted copies of all requested records related to all assassination attempts against President Trump, all security threats against President Trump since 2021, and all assets requested by the Trump campaign and/or Trump USSS detail since 2021?

If confirmed, in accordance relevant guidance from the Department of Justice, I agree to comply with any reasonable request for information from any duly constituted committee of Congress.

167. What are your thoughts on the Secret Service's two missions, investigations and protections, and the responsibilities associated with these missions? Do you believe any adjustments should be made?

The Secret Service should be structured in a way that best allows it to fulfill its mission, including its vital role protecting the President, Vice President, and other designated individuals. If confirmed, I will consider any reforms that advance that goal.

168. Do you believe any or all of the Secret Service's operations should be removed from the Department? Please explain.

The Secret Service should be structured in a way that best allows it to fulfill its mission, including its vital role protecting the President, Vice President, and other designated individuals. If confirmed, I will consider any reforms that advance that goal.

169. The Secret Service may face cost increases in providing security for the President-Elect and his family. Given existing budget and resource constraints as well as the recent threats and assassination attempts made against the President-Elect, do you have concerns about the ability of the Service to provide significant and long-term security details for protectees?

If confirmed, I will seek to ensure the Secret Service has the resources it needs to provide security for its assigned individuals.

170. Are there any reforms that you would like to implement in the Secret Service given the recent assassination attempts against the President-Elect and the heightened threat environment for all protectees?

There are undoubtedly lessons to be learned from the attempts on President-elect Trump's life. It is critical to identify any necessary reforms, implement them thoroughly and quickly, and do everything possible to prevent such attacks in the future.

V. Accountability

Whistleblower Protections

171. Protecting whistleblower confidentiality is of the utmost importance to this Committee.

a. Please describe any previous experience with handling whistleblower complaints. What steps did you take to ensure those individuals did not face retaliation and that their claims were thoroughly investigated?

As Governor of South Dakota, I established a whistleblower hotline for higher education institutions. Taxpayers, students, parents, and others could voice their concerns using this hotline without fear of retribution. The hotline promoted transparency and accountability.

If confirmed, I will emphasize and foster a culture whereby the Department will comply with applicable whistleblower rules. I believe in protecting whistleblowers and giving them an opportunity to have their cases heard in a fair manner.

b. If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that whistleblower complaints are handled appropriately at the Department?

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that any whistleblower complaints within the Department are handled appropriately and in accordance with all federal laws.

c. If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that whistleblowers at DHS the Department do not face retaliation, and that complaints of retaliation are handled appropriately?

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that whistleblowers within the Department are not subject to retaliation, that their identifiers are protected, and that complaints are handled appropriately and in accordance with all federal laws.

Cooperation with the Inspector General

172. Inspectors General (IGs) face unique obstacles as they do their work, including budget challenges and disputes with agency heads over access to information. How do you view the Department's relationship with various Offices of Inspectors General (OIGs)?

IGs can play an important role in combatting fraud, waste, and abuse. In my time as a Member of Congress, I sponsored legislation to strengthen IG reporting requirements and hold agency officials accountable for fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement. If confirmed, I intend to rely on the Department's OIG (and associated offices within the Department components) to provide straightforward, unbiased reports about the state of the Department, the actions of its employees, and the use of taxpayer-funded resources.

173. Under what circumstances, if any, do you believe the Department would not be required to provide any OIG with timely access to agency records?

In the abstract, it is difficult to identify circumstances under which the Department would not provide an OIG with timely access to agency records in response to an appropriate OIG

request. I commit to working to ensure that an OIG receives access as appropriate under applicable laws.

174. If confirmed, do you commit to fully cooperate in a timely manner with any audits, investigations, and other reviews and related requests for information from IGs?

If confirmed, I look forward to cooperating with IGs to advance the Department's mission effectiveness.

175. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that all recommendations made by the DHS Inspector General are reviewed, responded to, if necessary, and, unless the agency justifies its disagreements with the recommendations, implemented to the fullest extent possible within a reasonable time period?

If confirmed, I commit to reviewing all recommendations made by the DHS IG and taking appropriate actions based on that review.

176. Under what circumstances do you believe it is appropriate for the DHS IG to redact OIG reports that are provided to Congress?

In the abstract, it is difficult to identify all circumstances in which the DHS IG should redact reports that are provided to Congress. I commit to working with the Department leadership and the DHS IG to ensure that Congress receives OIG reports as appropriate under applicable laws.

177. Will you commit to not interfere with any decision by the DHS Inspector General to provide members of the Committee with unredacted versions of any DHS Inspector General report?

I commit to working with the Department leadership and the DHS IG to ensure that Congress receives appropriate versions of OIG reports under applicable laws.

Cooperation with GAO

178. If confirmed, do you commit without reservation to ensuring GAO receives timely, comprehensive responses to requests for information, including for records, meetings, and information?

If confirmed, I will endeavor to work closely with GAO in its role to assist Congress with its oversight of the Department by ensuring the Department acts in an open, transparent, and timely manner.

179. If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure all DHS Department offices and employees cooperate fully and promptly with GAO requests?

GAO plays an important part in ensuring that the federal government operates efficiently and effectively for the American people. I look forward to working with the Department's management team and relevant stakeholders to enable GAO to fulfill that mission by acting

with openness and transparency and engaging with GAO's findings to improve the Department's performance.

VI. Relations with Congress

180. Do you agree without reservation to comply with any request or summons to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of Congress if you are confirmed?

If confirmed, in accordance with applicable opinions of the Office of Legal Counsel of the Department of Justice, I agree to comply with any reasonable request to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of Congress.

181. Do you agree without reservation to make any subordinate official or employee available to appear and testify before, or provide information to, any duly constituted committee of Congress if you are confirmed?

If confirmed, in accordance with the relevant opinions of the Office of Legal Counsel of the Department of Justice, I agree to make subordinate officials available to testify before, and provide information to, any duly constituted committee of Congress.

182. Do you agree without reservation to comply fully, completely, and promptly to any request for documents, communications, or any other agency material or information from any duly constituted committee of the Congress if you are confirmed?

If confirmed, in accordance with the relevant opinions of the Office of Legal Counsel of the Department of Justice, I agree to comply with any reasonable request for documents, communications, or any other agency material or information from any duly constituted committee of Congress.

183. Do you agree without reservation to reply to any reasonable request for documents, communications, or any other agency material or information from the Ranking Member of any duly constituted committee of the Congress?

If confirmed, in accordance relevant guidance from the Department of Justice, I agree to comply with any reasonable request for information from any duly constituted committee of Congress.

184. If confirmed, how will you make certain that you will respond in a timely manner to Member requests for information?

If confirmed, in accordance with the relevant opinions of the Office of Legal Counsel of the Department of Justice, I will work to ensure that the Department responds in a timely manner to reasonable requests for information from Members of Congress.

185. Congress imposes strict limitations on the reprogramming or transfer of appropriated funds. Will you commit to adhering to the parameters set by Congress in appropriations bills? If the Department seeks to move funds within or between accounts, will you commit to consulting with senators from both parties prior to reprogramming or transferring appropriated funds?

If confirmed, I commit to following the law with respect to the use of appropriated funds for the Department.

186. If confirmed, will you direct your staff to adopt a presumption of openness where practical, including identifying documents that can and should be proactively released to the public without requiring a Freedom of Information Act request?

If confirmed, I will work to promote transparency throughout the Department in accordance with applicable law and policy.

187. If confirmed, will you keep this Committee apprised of new information if it materially impacts the accuracy of information your agency's officials have provided us?

If confirmed, in accordance with the relevant opinions of the Office of Legal Counsel of the Department of Justice, I agree to keep the Committee apprised of new information that materially impacts the accuracy of information the Department's officials have provided to the Committee.

VII. Assistance

188. Are these answers your own? If not, who has provided you with assistance?

As in my role as Governor, I regularly seek the input and advice of advisors. The answers I provide, however, are completely my own.

189. Have you consulted with DHS or any other interested parties? If so, please indicate which entities.

I did not consult with the Department of Homeland Security in providing my answers to these questions.

190. Have you used any Artificial Intelligence tool to assist in drafting, editing, or reviewing your answers?

No.

I, Kristi Noem, hereby state that I have read the foregoing Pre-Hearing Questionnaire and that the information provided therein is, to the best of my knowledge, current, accurate, and complete.

(Signature)

This 9 day of January, 2025

Post-Hearing Questions for the Record
Submitted to Hon. Kristi Noem
Senator Gary C. Peters

Nomination of Governor Kristi Noem to be Secretary, Department of Homeland Security
Friday, January 17, 2025

1. As DHS Secretary, what improvements and changes will you implement to ensure that unaccompanied children and accompanied children receive adequate access to healthcare while in DHS custody?

   If confirmed, I will ensure the Department provides appropriate care for unaccompanied alien children in custody before they are transferred by law to the custody of the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement. The Department must also prioritize securing the border and stopping illegal immigration so vulnerable migrants are not exploited by cartels and human traffickers.

2. Governor Noem, as it relates to the Flores Settlement Agreement requirements, do you guarantee that the Flores monitoring staff will be allowed all appropriate and applicable access to CBP and ICE facilities to ensure that the Flores Settlement Agreement is being enforced?

   If confirmed, I commit to abiding by the laws that Congress has passed and applicable court orders.

3. In your pre-hearing questionnaire when asked about whether you would commit to not having DHS components and their personnel (such as CBP, USCIS, ICE, etc.) collaborating with paramilitary and militia groups along the southern/our nation's border, you said you would do what is in accordance with the Constitution and the rule of law. Do you consider U.S. government collaboration with paramilitary organizations and militia groups legal? If you are not sure, how would you go about determining whether such activities are legal?

   If confirmed, under my leadership DHS will comply with the law, and we will work to quickly and effectively secure the border.

4. During the first Trump administration, then-Secretary Nielsen testified that the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) statute authorized extensions of TPS only where problems arising from the *original condition* that triggered TPS designation continued to exist. Is that also your view, and will you make TPS decisions with that approach in mind?

   If confirmed, I will approach TPS designation decisions on a case-by-case basis, as the law requires.

5. Do you have concerns that countries which have been designated for TPS status for many years are not in a "temporary" status? Is the statute intended to be limited to providing TPS status for only a few years at most?

   If confirmed, I will approach TPS designation decisions on a case-by-case basis as they arise.

6. The Biden Administration made several significant TPS decisions during the week of January 13, 2025. Does the incoming Trump administration have authority to reconsider those decisions, and if so on what basis?

   I have not consulted with legal counsel on this issue at this time. If confirmed, I will approach TPS designation decisions on a case-by-case basis as they arise.

7. According to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) website (www.cbp.gov/about/mobile-apps-directory/cbpone), the CBP One mobile application was first launched on October 28, 2020, during the previous Trump Administration. The application has a number of functions, to include checking the wait times at land border ports of entry, checking application or membership of Trusted Traveler Programs, requesting inspections of agricultural or biological products, and submission of traveler manifests, among others. You testified today that if confirmed that CBP One will be shut down. Do you plan to shut down all functions of CBP One?

   If confirmed, I will ensure that the parole functions of the CBP One app will be shut down to ensure compliance with the requirements of the parole statute in 8 U.S.C. 1182(d)(5).

8. In your pre-hearing questionnaire, when asked for a list of limits you would support on military involvement in immigration enforcement, you indicated that you would "work to ensure that the Department [of Homeland Security] achieves its mission of protecting the Homeland in accordance with the Constitution and the rule of law." Do you commit to following the "request for assistance" practice with the Department of Defense, and asking only for support which aligns with the Department of Defense's Support to Civil Authorities statutory authorities as enshrined in Sections 272-277 of Title 10, U.S. Code?

   Please see my pre-hearing questionnaire answer. If confirmed, I will use all legally available tools to secure the border and solve the crisis created by the outgoing administration.

9. Will you commit to ensuring the following with respect to the Department's use of facial recognition and facial capture technologies:

   a. That the Department will provide U.S. citizens the ability to opt out of non-law enforcement uses of these technologies?

      If confirmed, I commit to working with the Committee to address any concerns you may have.

b. That the Department will provide alternative processing for those who opt out that does not impose unnecessary burdens on the individual?

If confirmed, I commit to working with the Committee to address any concerns you may have.

c. That the Department will not use these technologies to profile, target, or discriminate against any individual solely for exercising their Constitutional rights?

If confirmed, I commit to upholding the constitutional rights of all Americans.

d. That the Department will not use these technologies to enable systemic, indiscriminate, or wide-scale monitoring, surveillance, or tracking?

If confirmed, I commit to working with the Committee to address any concerns you may have.

e. That all uses of these technologies will be periodically assessed to ensure that they meet performance goals that are in accordance with International Organization for Standardization/ International Electrotechnical Commission (ISO/IEC) standards and technical guidance issued by National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)?

I believe all programs should be routinely assessed to make sure that they are still necessary, still in the interest of the American public, and that they are being implemented in a manner that most efficiently achieves their goals.

10. As an agency within DHS, FEMA plays a critical role in supporting local governments and communities in disaster preparation, response, and relief. Will you commit that as Secretary, if confirmed, you will not divert or use any FEMA resources or personnel for immigration enforcement?

If confirmed, I will direct FEMA resources in accordance with the law.

11. During your nomination hearing, you discussed your opinion that the ability of some FEMA employees to telework, which also occurred during President Trump's first term, led to negative outcomes in North Carolina after Tropical Storm Helene. After the storm, FEMA had more than 1,700 employees working in person on the ground. Today, there are still 1,300 employees deployed and working in person. Can you clarify your comments?

It is my understanding that FEMA employees can decline to deploy to a disaster relief zone under the policies of the current administration. Given that policy, combined with documented discrimination that certain FEMA employees displayed towards Americans who support President Donald J. Trump, I think it is fair to question why North Carolina is still devastated and recovering from Hurricane Helene.

12. Your use of a state plane "blurred the lines between official travel and attending either family or political events," prompting a state investigation. If confirmed, you will have access to the Coast Guard One plane. Do you commit to ensuring that your use of government aircraft and other-than-coach-class travel will adhere to all relevant laws, rules, regulations, policies, and guidance?

    I refer you to my pre-hearing questionnaire explaining that this complaint was unanimously dismissed. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring that my use of government aircraft and government sponsored travel will adhere to all relevant laws, rules, regulations, policies, and guidance.

13. CISA currently has about 3,600 employees with a budget of around $3 billion. The Fiscal Year 2025 budget does not have a line item or personnel assigned to mis-and-dis-information work. Activities that have been described by some as "disinformation work" is, in reality, mainly personnel working critical missions in election security that support state and local governments with strategies to recognize and deal with security threats around elections.

    a. Given the critical work DHS and CISA do to protect our elections across the nation, will you commit to continuing CISA's election security supportive work?

        DHS, including CISA, has an important role to play in making sure that our election infrastructure is protected from hostile actors. This means securing voting machines and voter rolls so that only the responsible officials have access to them. DHS and CISA have no role to play in election-related speech or "misinformation" and if confirmed, I will direct the Department accordingly.

    b. If confirmed, how specifically would you direct DHS to protect 1st Amendment Rights?

        If confirmed, DHS will end any remaining programs started by the outgoing administration that infringe upon First Amendment protected speech.

14. Do you believe that federal agencies should be required to implement cybersecurity upgrades and maintain the highest cybersecurity standards to protect sensitive or classified data and U.S. citizen information as well?

    I believe that the US Government should take measures to protect U.S. citizen information and information deemed sensitive or classified.

15. The DHS Biodefense Analysis and Countermeasures Center (NBACC) is a unique biodefense laboratory that identifies credible biological weapons threats. If confirmed as DHS Secretary, will you commit to ensuring DHS retains this critical biodefense asset?

    If confirmed, I will conduct a review of all DHS components and programs, including the Biodefense Analysis and Countermeasures Center.

16. You testified during your confirmation hearing that the U.S. Secret Service is not being adequately staffed or resourced. If confirmed as DHS Secretary, what steps will you take to bolster the agency's resources and better meet retention and recruitment targets for the Secret Service?

    The Secret Service should be structured in a way that best allows it to fulfill its mission, including its vital role protecting the President, Vice President, and other designated individuals. If confirmed, I will consider any reforms that advance that goal.

17. Congress has provided initial funding for a new Great Lakes Icebreaker. Great Lakes icebreaking is critical to ensure that Great Lakes freighters can keep U.S. steel, manufacturing, and construction industries supplied with raw materials during the winter. Follow-on funding will be needed to deliver this asset. Will you commit to supporting additional funding for this ice breaker?

    President-elect Trump, in his first term, emphasized the importance of modernizing and expanding the Coast Guard's icebreaking capabilities. If confirmed, I will review the Coast Guard's current Icebreaker acquisition plans and requirements, including for a Great Lakes Icebreaker to compliment the Mackinaw, and look forward to the opportunity to work with you and the broader Congress to ensure the Icebreaker acquisition program is adequately resourced.

18. Do you commit to addressing both the threat from domestic terrorists, who are not inspired by foreign terrorist organizations, and homegrown violent extremists, who are inspired by foreign terrorist organizations, based on the threat assessment provided to you by the intelligence community, regardless of ideology?

    If confirmed, I commit to doing everything I can to make America safe again, including identification and mitigation of terrorist activity threats regardless of the motivations of the threat actor.

19. One of DHS's primary missions is to provide appropriate and accurate information and intelligence to state, local, Tribal, and territorial partners, including law enforcement and first responders, as well as the private sector. Yet we have heard concerns raised by these partners about how DHS implements this responsibility.

    a. As Secretary, how will you empower and direct the Department, including its intelligence component, the Office of Intelligence and Analysis, to meet its obligations regarding intelligence and information sharing with all relevant partners.

       If confirmed, I commit to working with the committee to address any concerns.

    b. Will you commit to ensuring that oversight offices maintain a robust role in ensuring that finished intelligence products do not infringe on Constitutional rights or violate other critical protections like those provided under the Privacy Act?

If confirmed, I will follow the law.

20. Will you commit to ensuring personnel at the Office of Intelligence and Analysis and any component personnel working on intelligence matters receive regular and targeted trainings on protecting privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties? What about individuals working at fusion centers, whether they are federal employees or not?

    I believe training is an important part of any position and that all DHS employees should be trained and informed to follow the law and best practices.

21. The Department of Homeland Security has a significant role in preventing the importation of goods produced with forced labor into the United States, through mechanisms like the Forced Labor Enforcement Task Force and implementation of the *Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act* (UFLPA). If confirmed, what are your priorities for forced labor enforcement? How would you address the challenge of entities seeking to undermine or block effective enforcement of UFLPA?

    If confirmed, I will ensure laws are enforced through the appropriate means established by Congress.

22. During your interview with HSGAC staff, you suggested that you would amend or reopen existing Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) with DHS staff if national security circumstances required it.

    a. Could this action negatively impact the morale and engagement of DHS staff?

       I do not believe your description above accurately reflects my statement to HSGAC staff. It would be inappropriate for me to answer this hypothetical question.

    b. Under what specific national security circumstances would it be necessary to amend or reopen the CBAs?

       It would be inappropriate for me to answer this hypothetical question given the potential national security sensitivities.

23. During your confirmation hearing, you said that the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) was in need of reform. Can you please explain what reforms are needed at TSA?

    During the Biden Administration, through a whistleblower compliant, TSA was discovered to be abusing their authority by, without merit, adding Americans to their Quiet Skies watch list which resulted in their being subjected to additional searches. There were other reports that federal air marshals were also being used to surveil individuals associated with the events of January 6, 2021, including those who did not go into the Capitol. If confirmed, I will stop the weaponization and politicization of DHS components, such as TSA, and refocus their attention on the core mission of protecting the security of our transportation systems.

Senator Richard Blumenthal
Post-Hearing Questions for the Record
Submitted to Kristi Noem

Nomination of Kristi Noem to be Secretary, Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
Friday, January 17, 2025

1. When I asked for your commitment to reunite the 1,000 children who are still separated from their families, you stated, "keeping families together is critically important to me and to this country" and that your focus will be "to keep families together." If confirmed, will you commit to not restarting the family separation policy that so horrified this nation when it became public in 2018?

   As I said during my testimony, there was not a family separation policy during President Trump's first term. If confirmed, I commit to securing the border so that we can stop the trafficking of children—for all sorts of horrendous purposes—that the outgoing administration's open-border policy has allowed.

2. In response to my question about President-elect Trump's history of politicizing disaster aid during his first term, you said, "I don't know about the scenarios that you're referencing with President Trump." Let me give you just one of the many egregious examples of President Trump playing politics with disaster relief during his first term. It is widely reported that in September 2020, then-President Trump ignored a request from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to aid in wildfire recovery in Washington State because of political disputes with Washington's then-Governor Jay Inslee. FEMA found that the damage from the wildfires surpassed the federal threshold for aid, yet President Trump refused to grant the declaration. A staffer for a Republican member of Congress whose district was damaged by the fires told the press at the time that the "holdup is now the relationship between the president and Gov. Inslee." The request was only acted on after President Biden took office, over four months later. In response to a question from Senator Lankford you said, "under President Trump's administration, disaster and emergency relief will not be handed out with political bias. Every American will be responded to and treated equally."

   a. Do you agree with then-President Trump's decisions to ignore FEMA's recommendation to issue a disaster declaration under the Stafford Act for Washington State in 2020?

      I am not familiar with the details of the example you reference, including the unnamed staffer to whom you refer. FEMA's website appears to reflect that President Trump awarded multiple Fire Grants to Washington State in 2020, including the Washington Sumner Grade Fire, Washington Bordeaux Road Fire, and the Washington Evans Canyon Fire.

   b. If confirmed, if you become aware of situations where President Trump is delaying or denying FEMA aid or otherwise discriminating in the provision of

government services based on political affiliation – or any basis other than merit – do you commit to stand up to the President and press him to expeditiously act on disaster declarations?

If confirmed, I will faithfully execute the responsibilities of the office and serve all Americans without political bias. The only bias of which I'm aware are the reports of FEMA denying aid to people who supported President Trump under President Biden's watch. President Trump cares deeply for all Americans and has never conditioned disaster support based on real or perceived political affiliation.

c. In such a scenario as described in the previous question, do you commit to immediately notifying the majority and minority members of this Committee?

It would be inappropriate to answer hypotheticals. Please see the answer above. If confirmed, I commit to working with this committee on Congressional oversight and transparency.

d. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that all money appropriated to FEMA is properly administered, including, for example, the money already passed in the recent disaster supplemental?

If confirmed, I will ensure that FEMA's resources are lawfully allocated.

3. The Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) is a vital program that funds security improvement for places at risk of attack, especially houses of worship. We are living in a time where hateful rhetoric and threats are on the rise – making the NSGP more critical than ever. You have spoken a lot about the need to protect Americans, and like I told you during the hearing, I want to make sure that we are protecting all Americans – regardless of their place of worship, their race, or their background. I was pleased that you committed to protecting all Americans from antisemitism, racism, and Islamophobia in response to my questions, and the NSGP is one of the best tools we have to accomplish that goal. Do you support increasing resources to the Nonprofit Security Grant Program? If not, please explain why not.

While appropriations decisions are, appropriately, made by Congress, if confirmed, I commit to ensuring the safety of all Americans, regardless of any specific program or funding stream.

4. The de minimis exemption is an increasingly exploited mechanism used to import fentanyl and precursor chemicals, counterfeit goods, and other illegal items through our nation's ports and in our mail delivery systems. U.S Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) reports that, on average, its officers process more than 4 million de minimis shipments each day. In response to a question asked by Senator Hassan you said, "I think de minimis shipments are a concern and the need to look at those and how traffickers and fentanyl distributors are using that."

a. What reforms do you support to the de minimis program?

If confirmed, I plan to use tools such as nonintrusive technology to help the Department address this challenge.

b. The original intended use of the de minimis exemption was for returning travelers with low-value gifts and personal articles below $200. Do you think continuation of the current commercial application of de minimis is appropriate?

If confirmed, I will continue to enforce the current de minimis exemptions which were passed into law by Congress.

c. Under Section 321 of the Tariff Act, CBP has the authority to deny de minimis treatment when necessary to prevent unlawful importations. If confirmed, will you direct CPB to reduce or eliminate its use of de minimis exemptions as necessary?

If confirmed, I will utilize all authorities granted to prevent unlawful importations into the United States.

d. On Monday, CBP announced a new proposed rule that would increase the information it receives about these shipments to enable it to target high-risk shipments more effectively. If confirmed, will you ensure CBP issues the final rule under this rulemaking expeditiously?

I have not studied this proposed rule in detail, but if confirmed, I will thoroughly review policies and proposed rules aimed at targeting high-risk shipments more effectively.

e. The European Union recently announced a new customs rule that requires the company facilitating or making an online, telephone, catalogue or other remote direct-to-consumer sale to be the importer of record and use formal entry (with a registered customs broker and bonding) for such goods. What is your view on this rule?

If confirmed, I will work closely with the CBP Office of Trade to further review and examine how this will affect imports and exports.

5. In response to a question from Senator Lankford, you said, "I was surprised TSA didn't come up more today, but that is an area in need of reform as well." Please describe the reforms you believe are needed at TSA.

During the Biden Administration, through a whistleblower compliant, TSA was discovered to be abusing their authority by, without merit, adding Americans to their Quiet Skies watch list which resulted in their being subjected to additional searches. There were other reports that federal air marshals were also being used to surveil

individuals associated with the events of January 6, 2021, including those who did not go into the Capitol. If confirmed, I will stop the weaponization and politicization of DHS components, such as TSA, and refocus their attention on the core mission of protecting the security of our transportation systems.

6. There has been much discussion about potential structural changes to DHS, including combining multiple divisions that focus on immigration, moving the Coast Guard to the U.S. Department of Defense, and splitting the function of the United States Secret Service. You refused to provide a specific answer as to whether you thought there were duplicative activities at or agencies within DHS.

   a. Do you believe there is a need for structural change at DHS?

      It is premature to answer this question. If confirmed, I will work with the Committee to address issues that require legislative solutions as they arise.

   b. Have you had discussions with President-elect Trump on structural changes?

      I am not going to comment on my discussions with the President.

   c. If the answer to the previous question is "Yes," please provide the dates of each conversation(s) and describe the nature of the conversation.

      Not applicable.

   d. If confirmed, do you anticipate making any structural changes at DHS?

      It is premature to answer this question. If confirmed, I will work with the Committee to address issues that require legislative solutions as they arise.

   e. If the answer to the previous question is anything besides "No," please describe in detail the potential structural changes you are considering.

      Not applicable.

7. On September 12, 2023, the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations initiated a bipartisan investigation into the United States Coast Guard's cover up of Operation Fouled Anchor, a multi-year internal investigation of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy's mishandling of sexual misconduct allegations from 1990 to 2006. If confirmed, do you commit to instructing DHS and the Coast Guard to fully cooperate with the Subcommittee's ongoing investigation, including by providing, in full and without redaction, all records responsive to the Subcommittee's outstanding requests?

   If confirmed, I will work to accommodate the Committee's oversight requests while protecting the privileges of the Executive Branch through the constitutionally mandated accommodations process, which has long been recognized and adhered to by administrations of both political parties.

8. During natural disasters and other public health emergencies, DHS routinely suspends enforcement actions, absent exigent circumstances, in locations affected by such disasters so that individuals fleeing such events or who have been displaced may take care of their basic, immediate needs without fear of immigration enforcement. In fact, during then-President Trump's first term, DHS did so in areas affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Florence, and Dorian; California wildfires in 2018 and 2019; and tropical storm Barry, among others. If confirmed, will you commit to continuing the longstanding practice of assuring the public that routine immigration enforcement actions will not take place in areas affected by natural disasters or other public health emergencies?

   If confirmed, my mission as Secretary will be to serve the interests of the American people. It would be inappropriate to answer when or where enforcement actions may or may not take place in hypothetical future scenarios.

9. Since 2020, alarming reports continue to surface over the derelict care of pregnant, postpartum, and nursing individuals in the custody of CBP. CBP policy is currently not aligned with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) policy, which prohibits the detention of people who are pregnant, postpartum, and/or nursing for any period longer than the minimum time necessary to process them, absent exceptional circumstances.

   a. If confirmed, will you maintain current ICE policy prohibiting the detention of people who are pregnant, postpartum, and/or nursing for any period longer than the minimum time necessary to process them, absent exceptional circumstances?

      If confirmed, I will review the current policies of both ICE and CBP to determine whether they are appropriate and necessary.

   b. If confirmed, will you align CBP policy with ICE policy in prohibiting the detention of people who are pregnant, postpartum, and/or nursing for any period longer than the minimum time necessary to process them, absent exceptional circumstances?

      If confirmed, I will review the current policies of ICE and CBP to determine whether they are appropriate and necessary.

10. An essential function of DHS is carrying out legal immigration processes. A large share of legal immigration is derived from employment-based categories. It is vital to our national security interests that we attract and retain international science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) talent.

    a. If confirmed, how will you ensure that enforcement actions do not deter the best and brightest immigrants from around the world from coming to our country legally?

If confirmed, enforcement actions will be targeted against criminals, absconders, and other deportable aliens. Aliens who are lawfully in the country and follow the terms of their visa category would not be subject to enforcement actions.

b. If confirmed, how will you improve transparency and consistency in U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services adjudications, particularly for cases involving emerging technology fields where adjudicators may lack technical expertise?

I am not familiar with reports about a lack of transparency or consistency in USCIS adjudications involving emerging technology fields.

11. There is extensive documentation of white supremacist and extremist organizations actively attempting to recruit active-duty law enforcement officials.

a. Do you agree that active involvement in a white supremacist organization is incompatible with the mission of DHS?

I am not familiar with the information referenced in this question and reject the premise that there are ties between law enforcement and white supremacist organizations. If confirmed, I will prioritize the safety and security of all Americans from all threats, regardless of the motivations of the threat actors.

b. If confirmed, how will you ensure that DHS does not hire or retain law enforcement officials who hold discriminatory white supremacist views or are involved with white supremacist organizations?

If Members of Congress are aware of any DHS law enforcement officer who is involved with any white supremacist organization, I will, if confirmed, investigate the matter once actionable information is sent to the Department.

12. Congress codified the rights of federal employees to organize and collectively bargain as part of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978. In your pre-hearing questionnaire, you said you supported "legally valid" collective bargaining rights and agreements.

a. Do you support the right of workers, including federal employees, to organize and collectively bargain?

I refer you to my pre-hearing questionnaire.

b. If the answer to the previous question is not simply "Yes," please explain the circumstances under which you do not support such rights.

Not applicable.

c. If confirmed, do you agree not to interfere in organizing attempts by any eligible DHS employee?

I refer you to my pre-hearing questionnaire.

d. If confirmed, do you commit to honoring all existing collective bargaining agreements covering DHS employees?

I refer you to my pre-hearing questionnaire.

e. If confirmed, do you commit that you will not terminate any collective bargaining agreement that includes DHS employees?

I refer you to my pre-hearing questionnaire.

13. There have been baseless, partisan attacks against the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) over its election security efforts, including its efforts to debunk lies about the accuracy and security of the 2020 election. If confirmed, do you commit to protecting the nonpartisan work of CISA to secure our elections, including its ongoing work to provide accurate information about voting and vote counting?

CISA has an important role to play in making sure that our election infrastructure is protected from hostile actors. This means securing voting machines and voter rolls so that only the responsible officials have access to them. CISA has no role or authority to police election-related speech or "misinformation" and if confirmed, I will direct the Department accordingly.

14. According to the intelligence community, Russia, China, and Iran engaged in sophisticated and brazen hacking and influence campaigns to interfere in the 2024 Presidential election. For example, one Chinese hacking group, "Salt Typhoon," broke into several American phone companies to spy on political and government targets, and Iranian hackers targeted both the Trump and Harris campaigns and then sought to weaponize stolen campaign material against President-elect Trump. By all accounts, our foreign adversaries believe they can wiretap Presidential campaigns and interfere with our elections without repercussions. If confirmed, how do you plan to respond to the Salt Typhoon attacks and address this escalating threat of foreign interference and hacking in our elections?

As our telecommunications infrastructure is privately owned, CISA, along with the other relevant federal agencies, will continue to work with private-sector partners to eradicate these intruders from our networks.

15. Law enforcement and intelligence agencies are increasingly purchasing sensitive information about Americans from data brokers. These purchases appear to avoid constitutional privacy protection, such as warrant requirements, and can include information about Americans' medical histories, religious beliefs, and movements. How

do you plan to address the issue of DHS purchasing sensitive information about Americans from data brokers?

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the committee to address this issue.

16. The Flores Settlement Agreement applies to accompanied children, that is children who are traveling with their parents. In the past, there has been litigation related to the interpretation of the Flores Settlement Agreement and how long accompanied children may be detained. Will you honor the court's holding that accompanied children in most instances cannot be detained more than 20 days?

    If confirmed, I commit to abiding by the laws that Congress has passed and applicable court orders.

17. Do you plan to expand interior border patrol checkpoints and if so, based on what criteria?

    If confirmed, I will examine and review Border Patrol's current operational plans and report any proposed changes to expand checkpoints.

18. In your pre-hearing questionnaire, you pointed to President Trump as the commander in chief in response to how the military might be used in immigration enforcement. What do you see as your role in requesting the support of the Department of Defense or National Guard in supporting DHS missions?

    I refer you to my pre-hearing questionnaire. If confirmed, I will give the President my honest advice on issues within my jurisdiction.

19. In your pre-hearing questionnaire, when asked for your understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the military in immigration enforcement, you indicated that you would "work to ensure that the Department [of Homeland Security] achieves its mission of protecting the Homeland in accordance with the Constitution and the rule of law." Do you agree that certain deployments of the national guard under Title 32, U.S. Code, across state lines without the consent of another state's governor, could be a violation of the Constitution?

    It would be inappropriate for me to answer this hypothetical question of law. If confirmed, I will work with counsel and the Attorney General to ensure that the Department complies with the law.

Senator Andy Kim
Post-Hearing Questions for the Record
Submitted to Governor Kristi Noem
Nominations of Kristi Noem to be Secretary, DHS;
Friday, January 17, 2025

1. Could you identify steps you will take to reduce the backlog of *legal* applications in our immigration systems?

   Legal applicants who play by the rules have been negatively affected by the disaster on our southern border. The best way to reduce the backlog of legal applications is to address the border crisis. USCIS personnel and resources have been redirected to support operations at the southern border, resulting in the current backlog.

2. Will you prioritize appropriations requests that invest in our immigration courts, specifically for more judges and personnel so we can reduce the backlog?

   Immigration courts are under the purview of the Department of Justice. I defer to the Attorney General and the congressional appropriations committees on the additional appropriations needed to reduce the backlog.

3. What number of immigration judges do you feel is necessary to effectively reduce the immigration backlog?

   Immigration courts are under the purview of the Department of Justice. I defer to the Attorney General on the number of immigration judges needed to reduce the backlog. That said, the quicker we can close the border, the quicker we will be able to reduce the backlog.

4. The Supreme Court has set the precedent that persons present in the United States, regardless of immigration status have a right to due process as afforded by the Constitution. Do you believe that all persons in the U.S. - whether present legally or illegally are afforded that right to due process?

   I defer to the Attorney General on interpretations of law, but agree that all persons present in the United States are afforded some level of due process.

5. Do you believe that DACA recipients are one of those groups protected under the Constitution for a right to due process?

   I refer you to my answer to question 4. Additionally, the DACA policy is currently in litigation. If confirmed, I will follow all judicial rulings and the advice of counsel.



Airlines for America®
We Connect the World

Nicholas E. Calio
President and CEO

January 13, 2025

The Honorable Rand Paul
Chairman
U.S. Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Gary Peters
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Paul and Ranking Member Peters:

Airlines for America (A4A), representing the leading U.S. passenger and cargo airlines, supports the nomination of Governor Kristi Noem to be the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

Through her experience as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives and governor of South Dakota, Governor Noem has distinguished herself as a leader who will tackle tough issues and diligently work to secure our nation from both domestic and foreign threats. A4A is eager to collaborate with her on many key issues facing the aviation sector, such as:

- Ending Transportation Security Fee diversion;
- Harmonizing cybersecurity reporting requirements;
- Ensuring airline leaders have access to timely intelligence information for actionable decision making;
- Codifying the principle of risk-based, outcomes-focused and performance-based policies for physical and cybersecurity that avoid a one-size fits all approach and promote more efficient and effective use of security resources;
- Accelerating the testing and deployment of advanced screening technologies and methods for passengers, baggage and cargo; and
- Expanding Trusted Traveler and security facilitation programs (e.g., One Stop Security and international to domestic checked baggage transfer) that streamline the international arrivals and transfer processes.

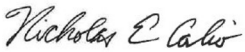
Much is at stake: Every day, U.S. airlines operate more than 27,000 flights, transporting 2.7 million passengers and 61,000 tons of cargo. U.S. passenger and cargo airlines enhance economic prosperity by directly employing more than one million full-time and part-time workers across the globe, while commercial aviation drives 5 percent of U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Commercial air travel in the U.S. is the safest mode of transportation in the world but maintaining this requires desperately needed investment and government attention

in both human and technology infrastructure to remain the global leader.

The safety and security of our people, assets and customers is our number one priority. A4A members are at the forefront of driving innovative solutions to mitigate risk and facilitate legitimate trade and travel since security and facilitation are foundational for our industry.

A4A welcomes Governor Noem's leadership on these critical issues and urges the Senate to expeditiously confirm her nomination.

Sincerely,



Nicholas E. Calio



December 16, 2024

Senator John Thune
Incoming Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Rand Paul, MD
Incoming Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leaders Thune, Schumer, and Chairman Paul:

We write today to call for the swift confirmation of Governor Kristi Noem to serve as the next Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Her leadership as Governor of South Dakota and deep understanding of the challenges facing our nation qualify her to lead this critical department at a pivotal time in our nation's history.

Governor Noem has demonstrated a deep commitment to upholding the rule of law, protecting our borders, and ensuring the safety and security of the American people. She has taken decisive action to address the Biden border crisis, as the first Governor to deploy state resources, including sending the South Dakota National Guard to assist with border security operations in Texas. As the commander-in-chief, she knows that every state is a border state and has deployed guardsmen five times to defend the border. Many Governors have followed her lead and committed their own resources to the border cause. It is clear she recognizes the border crisis as a national issue with far-reaching implications for public safety, human trafficking, economic stability, and national security.

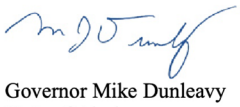
In addition to her efforts on border security, Governor Noem has demonstrated exceptional leadership in tackling broader homeland security challenges. Her record includes a strong focus on disaster preparedness and response, imposing limited and constitutional measures, training and supporting of law enforcement, and historic investments in cybersecurity. All of these are integral to the mission of DHS.

Governor Noem faced historic challenges in her six years of governing, whether it was managing 12 significant disasters warranting requests for Public Assistance grants from FEMA or her decision to not shut down South Dakota when the coronavirus spread through the country. Governor Noem's leadership boosted the state's economy which allowed significant investments to strengthen public infrastructure, making her home state more resilient to future natural disasters and cybersecurity threats. Governor Noem's proven track record leaves us with no doubt that she is the right person to lead DHS in its multifaceted mission to protect the American people.

After a tumultuous period of national security issues during the Biden Administration, the Department of Homeland Security requires a leader with experience, vision, and the courage to act decisively in the face of adversity.

We urge you to act quickly to confirm Governor Kristi Noem's nomination by President Donald J. Trump. Strong and experienced leadership at DHS is essential to ensuring our nation's safety and security.

Sincerely,



Governor Mike Dunleavy
State of Alaska



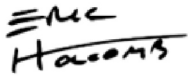
Governor Sarah Sanders
State of Arkansas



Governor Brian Kemp
State of Georgia



Governor Brad Little
State of Idaho



Governor Eric Holcomb
State of Indiana



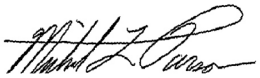
Governor Kim Reynolds
State of Iowa



Governor Jeff Landry
State of Louisiana



Governor Tate Reeves
State of Mississippi



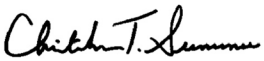
Governor Mike Parson
State of Missouri



Governor Greg Gianforte
State of Montana



Governor Jim Pillen
State of Nebraska



Governor Chris Sununu
State of New Hampshire



Governor Doug Burgum
State of North Dakota



Governor Mike DeWine
State of Ohio



Governor Kevin Stitt
State of Oklahoma



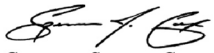
Governor Henry Dargan McMaster
State of South Carolina



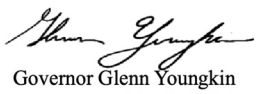
Governor Bill Lee
State of Tennessee



Governor Greg Abbott
State of Texas



Governor Spencer Cox
State of Utha



Governor Glenn Youngkin
Commonwealth of Virginia



Governor Jim Justice
State of West Virginia



Governor Mark Gordon
State of Wyoming

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January 8th, 2025

The Honorable Rand Paul
Chair
Committee on Homeland Security
and Government Affairs
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Gary Peters
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security
and Government Affairs
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Paul and Ranking Member Peters:

The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) is the driving force behind nearly every advance in the fire and emergency services in the 21st century. With offices in Washington, D.C., and Ottawa, Ontario, the IAFF is the fire service's strongest voice at the federal level. Today, 85% of communities across the U.S. and Canada are protected by our 353,000 members.

We are often the first on scene to deal with tragedy and disaster and the men and women of the fire and emergency services risk their lives every workday. The IAFF is a strong advocate for federal, state and local cooperation and we recognize the important role the Department of Homeland Security plays in the mission of our members.

We support President Trump's nomination of Governor Kristi Noem for Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. As a Governor, nominee Noem understands emergency management and the importance of government response to emergencies both natural and manmade. She has earned broad support from law enforcement unions, and we join many other organizations in calling for her speedy confirmation.

There is no greater government service than public safety. The members of IAFF are proud to serve our communities, and we look forward to working with Governor Noem and the Department of Homeland Security in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

Edward A. Kelly
General President

1750 New York Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20006

IAFF.ORG

INSTITUTE OF MAKERS OF EXPLOSIVES
SAFETY. SECURITY. STEWARDSHIP.

January 13, 2025

The Honorable Rand Paul
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security
And Governmental Affairs
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Gary Peters
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security
And Governmental Affairs
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Paul and Ranking Member Peters,

On behalf of the Institute of Makers of Explosives (IME), I write in support of confirming Kristi Noem as Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Ms. Noem's extensive experience as a state legislator, member of Congress and Governor of South Dakota makes her uniquely qualified for this position.

The commercial explosives industry, including manufacturers, distributors and users, is vital to the U.S. economy, contributing more than $19 billion annually to the U.S. economy and creating 15,000 direct industry jobs and more than 60,000 total jobs.

The safety and security of our products and the communities in which we operate is paramount to our industry. As one of the most highly regulated industries in the world, our members work tirelessly to promote the security of our products throughout the entire supply chain. We are proud of our proven track record of adhering to strict security protocols to safeguard explosive products and their precursors against theft, diversion, or illicit use throughout their lifecycle.

If confirmed, Ms. Noem is well positioned to lead DHS and ensure that the ever-evolving security threats including cyber security and unmanned drones are addressed in a safe and efficient manner. We also believe she will be instrumental in securing the border while ensuring that businesses and industry are able to source well-qualified workers to fill the thousands of vacant positions and keep the economy growing.

I strongly encourage the committee to support the confirmation of Kristi Noem to be Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and favorably report her nomination to the full Senate for consideration.

Sincerely,

J. Clark Mica
President

1212 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 650, Washington, DC 20005, USA, (202) 429-9280



NATIONAL FUSION CENTER ASSOCIATION

Helping To Protect America

January 13, 2025

The Honorable John Thune
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rand Paul
295 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Gary Peters
724 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Thune, Minority Leader Schumer, Chairman Paul, and Ranking Member Peters:

On behalf of the National Fusion Center Association, which represents eighty state and major urban area fusion centers comprising over 3,000 public safety professionals, I am pleased to express support for the nomination of Kristi Noem to be Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Fusion centers were established by state and local governments nationwide in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks. These centers are state and locally managed programs designed to assist in identifying, preventing, and mitigating terrorist acts, major criminal activity, and other significant threats to public safety and the well-being of our citizens.

The Secretary of Homeland Security, alongside the Department of Homeland Security and its component agencies play an essential role in supporting this mission. It is crucial that the Secretary of Homeland Security leverage the capabilities of the National Network of Fusion Centers to protect our nation. Effective information sharing at all levels of government is critical to our shared objective of securing the homeland. A strong partnership between the National Network of Fusion Centers and DHS is vital to our collective efforts to identify, analyze, and prevent a broad spectrum of threats.

Governor Noem brings a distinguished record of public service, including her tenure as Governor of South Dakota and as a former member of the U.S. House of Representatives. Her proven dedication to enhancing law enforcement capabilities and addressing homeland security challenges at both state and national levels underscores her readiness to lead DHS. Her experience and steadfast commitment instill confidence that she will prioritize ensuring all stakeholders have the tools and resources needed to safeguard our communities effectively.

If confirmed, we look forward to working closely with Ms. Noem to advance our shared mission of protecting the homeland. We respectfully urge your support of her nomination and appreciate your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Mike Sena
President, National Fusion Center Association
415-725-1000 | msena@nfcausa.org

NEMA®
National Emergency Management Association

National Emergency Management Association Headquarters
1776 Avenue of the States I Lexington, Kentucky 40511
(859) 244-8000

Washington, D.C. Office
444 North Capitol Street, Suite 401 I Washington, DC 20001
(202) 624-5459

January 16, 2025

The Honorable Rand Paul, Chairman
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Gary Peters, Ranking Member
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Paul and Ranking Member Peters:

The National Emergency Management Association (NEMA), representing the state emergency management directors of all 50 states, territories, and the District of Columbia, are pleased to offer our support for the nomination of Governor Kristi Noem for Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Her time as Governor of the State of South Dakota uniquely positions her to understand the role of state and local officials in national preparedness and disaster response. She consistently demonstrates her commitment to the safety and well-being of her communities by providing leadership and support during both response and recovery operations. This has been shown time and time again while she was a member of Congress and now as South Dakota's Governor.

Governor Noem remains an ally to emergency responders and emergency managers, ensuring their needs are met during times of crisis. Under her leadership, South Dakota has faced twelve emergency, major, and Fire Management Assistance Grant (FMAG) disasters. In each instance, Governor Noem played a crucial role in the response. She is quick to provide reassurance to survivors, and supports local government officials with the resources, assets, and personnel necessary to respond effectively. Governor Noem's leadership has been instrumental in navigating South Dakota through challenging times, and her commitment to public service is commendable.

Your leadership in ensuring a swift and successful confirmation of Governor Noem will allow DHS to continue addressing its statutory missions that are so vital during our nation's most challenging moments. We stand ready to work with her and you on addressing the homeland security and emergency management issues before us.

Sincerely,

Lynn Budd
President

President: Ms. Lynn Budd, WY | **Vice President:** Mr. A.J. Gary, AR | **Secretary:** Mr. Bryan Fisher, AK
Treasurer: Mr. Robert Ezelle, WA | **Past-President:** Mr. Russell Strickland, MD | **Executive Director:** Ms. Trina Sheets

SECURE COMMUNITY NETWORK
540 NORTH DEARBORN STREET, P.O. BOX 10303, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610 | 844.SCN.DESK | SECURECOMMUNITYNETWORK.ORG

MICHAEL MASTERS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

WENDY BERGER
CHAIR

03 January 2025

The Honorable Rand Paul
Chair
Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Paul:

On behalf of the Secure Community Network (SCN), the official safety and security organization of the North American Jewish community, please accept this letter of support for the nomination of Governor Kristi Noem to be the Secretary of the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Because of the critical role that DHS plays in securing the Jewish community from the very serious threats that we face, we strongly urge that the Senate swiftly confirm Governor Noem so that she can immediately begin addressing the pressing safety concerns facing our community, and our country, on the first day of the new administration, and as the Senate has done for prior nominees for the vital position of DHS Secretary. SCN has worked closely with each Senate-confirmed Secretary since DHS was created across multiple administrations; we cannot overstate the value that we have seen – firsthand – of having experienced, established leadership in place within the Department.

Founded in 2004, under the auspices of The Jewish Federations of North America and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, SCN works on behalf of the over 50 largest Jewish nonprofit organizations in North America, 146 Federations, and over 350 additional communities, as well as with other partners to ensure the safety, security, and resiliency of the Jewish people. Through our network, partnerships, and associations, SCN represents and works on behalf of over 90 percent of the 7.2 million members of the organized Jewish community across North America – covering hundreds of communities, over 12,500 institutions, and the vast majority of the self-identifying Jewish community members in the United States.

SCN also serves as the official liaison between the American Jewish community and federal law enforcement and other public safety partners, and coordinates closely with federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies on safety and security matters related to the Jewish community. In this capacity, SCN works with the federal government, notably DHS, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and other federal law enforcement, investigative, and intelligence entities, to address threats through intelligence and information sharing, developing policies and procedures as well as physical and cyber security resources, designing and providing life-saving trainings and exercises to the community, as well as undertaking crisis response in the aftermath of incidents and attacks. As such, we have developed and implemented programs across our country – in urban, suburban, and rural communities – that are best-practice, comprehensive, and standardized, while strengthening the relationship between our community and government.

There are few governors who have shown greater interest or been a stronger partner in building substantive relationships of trust between government and the faith-based community – and our Jewish community, in particular – to ensure the safety and security of the same, than Governor Noem. Her attention to this has been even more meaningful given that the Jewish population in South Dakota is one of the smallest of any state. The Governor's attention to our community, however, was not based on our size, but her recognition of the importance of religious freedom – and that the Jewish community is the most threatened religious community in our nation. For this, we were – and remain – deeply appreciative to her.

As a member of the House of Representatives and, most recently in her current capacity, Governor Noem has personally worked to address the threats and risks faced by faith-based communities, and the Jewish community, in particular: the Governor has spoken out against acts of antisemitism and threats to the Jewish community, notably in the wake of Hamas' terrorist attacks on Israel, and the taking of hostages by Hamas, to include American citizens. Governor Noem has expended time, resources, and attention to ensure that Jewish institutions across the state of South Dakota, to include houses of worship, have adequate security measures and precautions in place to allow our community to gather and pray in peace.

Governor Noem's actions have been critical to ensuring Jewish life could not merely exist but thrive. Since October 7th, 2024, the Jewish community in America has faced the most unprecedented threat dynamic in our nation's history. FBI data reflects that in the last year, more hate crimes have been committed against Jewish people than any other ethnic group. SCN's own efforts include intaking over 5,200 threat incident and suspicious activity reports, the majority of which were shared with DHS, recording a 250% increase in college campus incident reports, and documenting an almost 200% increase in referrals we have made to law enforcement.

From state to non-state actors motivated by a range of violent extremist ideologies, we have seen individuals and organizations target our community across both physical and cyber spaces. We require – as a faith-based community and a country – leadership that is knowledgeable, tested, and committed to combatting threats to the Homeland and to faith-based communities, in particular. In Governor Noem, the President-elect has identified just such an individual.

On behalf of the security professionals who comprise our organization and the community that we have committed ourselves to both serve and protect, we respectfully and strongly encourage the swift confirmation of Governor Kristi Noem as the next Secretary of DHS.

Very Respectfully,

Wendy Berger
Chair, Board of Directors

Michael G. Masters
National Director and CEO

cc: The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President-elect of the United States of America
The Office of Donald J. Trump
1100 South Ocean Boulevard
Palm Beach, Florida 33480

TRIBAL COUNCIL
(AT LARGE)

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Truth ╬ Compassion

Remember Who We Are

January 17, 2025

The Honorable Rand Paul
Chairman
Senate Comm. on Homeland Security &
Governmental Affairs
340 Senate Dirksen Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Gary Peters
Ranking Member
Senate Comm. on Homeland Security &
Governmental Affairs
340 Senate Dirksen Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: SRST Support for South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem to serve as the Secretary, Dept of Homeland Security

As the Chairwoman of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, I, Janet Alkire, write to support Governor Kristi Noem's nomination to serve as the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. As an elected woman to a leadership position in a more traditional and conservative state such as South Dakota, where women in leadership tend to face challenges unlike our male counterparts, I empathize with the Governor and her ability to continue to stand strong in stature and demeanor despite any negative persuasions she must robustly contend.

Though it is no great mystery that Governor Noem has had to face conflict amongst the Tribal Nations of South Dakota, it is my own perspective that Governor Noem has personally shared her fair intent to rebuild the relationships with the Tribal Nations as she has promised her support to Standing Rock should she be officially appointed to serve as Secretary at the DHS.

On multiple occasions, Governor Noem has invited the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe to her table at the South Dakota State Capitol to enter into meaningful discussions. She has recognized the many challenges we face and her future ability to address those challenges at the DHS, such as the extended length of time it takes to hire police officers (by the time they are even considered, those candidates have more than likely take jobs elsewhere where the requirements are not as stringent and hiring process is only a few months. At Standing Rock, it can take over one year to get an officer hired.) Governor Noem understands the tribes' hiring challenges and is committed to helping in her position as Secretary. The Missing and Murdered Indigenous People crisis has reached epidemic proportions on reservations across North and South Dakota. Violent Crimes are a regular occurrence on our reservation. Drug trafficking is nearly invisible to the average citizen on Standing Rock and though we may be short-staffed, our officers work tirelessly to arrest those who come to Standing Rock to peddle their illegal wares. Public Safety is vital to the economic development not only to Standing Rock, but to our surrounding communities who depend on our casinos for success within their own local economies.

It is of great excitement and enthusiasm that our North Dakota Governor, Doug Burgum, will be at the helm of the Department of Interior, and my hopes remain high that you will feel the same about Governor Kristi Noem at the helm of the Department of Homeland Security. These two Governors understand the needs in Indian Country and what words like "Tribal Soveriegnty", "Jurisdiction", and "Consultation" mean to the indigenous people. I hope that Governor Noem rises to fulfill the commitments she has made to the Tribes in South Dakota, and will do the same with all Tribes across this great Nation in her position as Secretary.

It is with great honor that my expressed words of gratitude for consideration of Governor Noem as the next Secretary at the Department of Homeland Security, are able to be heard by you esteemed members of this Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Wopila Tanka. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Janet Alkire, Chairwoman
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

I am submitting this statement for inclusion in the record of the 15 January 2025 hearing of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee regarding the nomination of Kristi Noem to serve as Secretary of Homeland Security.

The Senate, as part of the independent first branch of the United States government under the United States Constitution, in the exercise of its constitutional duties in the confirmation process, has the authority and the responsibility to conduct the confirmation process in a manner that is free from interference by the other branches of government.

There is no right to be confirmed by the Senate. Being entrusted with the responsibilities of the position for which this nominee is seeking confirmation is a privilege and an honor, not a right. The confirmation process is essential for the position of trust for which she has been nominated. Each individual under consideration for confirmation by the Senate has the burden to convince the members of the Senate that such individual possesses the character, experience, background, ethical integrity, and ability necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, and possesses a commitment to the Constitution and the Rule of Law, both of which are necessary minimum standards for being considered for an affirmative vote.

Before this committee conducts a hearing to consider whether to recommend confirmation of the nominee, and in partial satisfaction of the nominee's burden to affirmatively demonstrate that she is committed to the Constitution and the Rule of Law, the nominee should be required complete and sign the two documents set out below.

I oppose any consideration by this committee of Ms. Noem's nomination until she has stated under oath that the 2020 Presidential Election was not stolen, and until she has completed and signed these two documents.

Consensual Waiver of Rights and Privileges

I, _____, having been nominated for the position of _____, and seeking a favorable recommendation from this committee, and acknowledging that I have no right to be confirmed and that it would be a privilege for me to be confirmed to serve in the position for which I have been nominated, now declare with respect to

- any unlawful conduct that I may be charged with having committed during my term in the post to which I am being nominated and for which I seek confirmation by the United States Senate;
- any criminal or civil charges based on conduct, statements, or evidence presented by me to the committee; and
- any criminal or civil charges for any past conduct that I testify about or that is described in my statements or other presentations by me to the committee,

I do hereby declare that with respect to those matters I voluntarily and irrevocably waive the following rights, privileges, and claims:

(1) the right to assert a claim of immunity, including but not limited to an assertion of absolute or qualified immunity, from criminal prosecution or civil liability;

(2) the Fifth Amendment right to remain silent and not to testify if summoned to testify;

(3) any protection that may be afforded to me by a pardon, nor will I seek or accept any pardon;

(4) any right to assert a claim that any proceedings against me are barred by a statute of limitations or similar principle based on the passage of time between the occurrence of the event(s) on which the charge(s) are based and the date for expiration of the term of office of the person who nominated me for this appointment, or expiration of my term if appointed, whichever date is later; and

(5) any right to assert a claim based on any version of a theory that my conduct was committed because I was "following orders" with respect to any conduct that I may be charged with; in doing so I recognize the principle that culpability for any conduct on my part in violation of any law may not be excused on a claim of "following orders."

Agency Policy Pledge

I, _____, having been nominated for the position of _____, and seeking a favorable recommendation from this committee, and acknowledging that I have no right to be confirmed and that it would be a privilege for me to be confirmed to serve in the position for which I have been nominated, as part of the responsibilities of the office for which confirmation is sought, do hereby pledge:

1. to (1) support and enforce existing whistleblower protections under federal law; (2) provide each employee in the agency, when first employed and in January of each year, with instructions on: whistleblower rights and protections, permitted grounds for a whistleblower complaint, and how to file a complaint; and (3) take no retaliation action nor any action to impair or discourage an employee from exercising rights under the Whistleblower Protection Act, 5 U.S.C. 2302(b)(8)-(9);
2. to take no action against an employee who has submitted a whistleblower complaint under the Whistleblower Protection Act from informing the chair and ranking member of the House and Senate committees with oversight responsibilities for the area of responsibility of the position for which I seek confirmation by the Senate, of the fact that the complaint has been filed and the substantial nature of the complaint; and to inform each employee in the agency of this policy when providing the instructions given to the employee in item (2) of the previous paragraph;
3. to inform each employee in the agency, when first employed and in January of each year: (1) of the fact that there is no "following orders" defense to any action the employee takes at the direction of any other person in government, and that the employee's culpability for any conduct of the employee in violation of any law will not be excused on a claim of "following orders," (2) that an employee who has received an order or instruction to commit an act in violation of any law should file a whistleblower complaint with the relevant agency officer and with the chair and ranking member of the House and Senate committees with oversight responsibilities for the agency, and (3) that the employee also may be called to testify against the person who gave such order or instruction; and
4. to secure a signed form from each employee acknowledging that the employee has received, understands, and agrees to comply with the principles of conduct described in the previous three paragraphs.

January 14, 2025

To: The Honorable Chairman, Senator Rand Paul,
and other Honorable Senators of the Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs Committee.

For the Official record on Appointment for Homeland Security Director:

My name is James Bialota, from South Dakota, I am pleading with you not to appoint Kristi Noem. Our nation deserves much better.

Being a US Military veteran, I was installed with a code of ethics including integrity, service before self, & excellence in all I do, none of which Noem processes.

While in the Air Force I did come across other terms that do fit Kristi Noem, Fraud, Waste and Abuse.

Fraud: Kristi Noem's use of the Governor's office of Economic Development, to pay her self-starred add campaign or to steal private business plans that were shared with Noem donors. Then stole the plans for state use. SD Shooting sports Complex near Rapid City SD, was 1 such plan. Stolen from a disabled veteran. Instead Covid funds went to 2 Noem family Businesses. State Attorney for the agency has ordered employees not to discuss the theft. Isn't that blocking whistleblowers?

Waste: Noem was caught using state aircraft to campaign, collect contributions, ferry friends and family on.

Noem spent $9 million of state funds, to advertise herself in an add campaign to bring people to SD, or was it to promote a future add campaign to get her face out nation wide politically, as the adds starred herself.

Abuse: Noem pressured staff to fire a state employee for giving her daughter a failing exam. Noem and the staff later claimed it was because the state employee was too old.
The employee received a $200K settlement for wrongful termination.

Nepotism: Noem hired family members for a multitude of state positions that is unlawful elsewhere in the Country.

SD Ethics Board members ruled "there was sufficient evidence that Noem engaged in conflict of interest and malfeasance."

Abandoned 200 families over a collapsing former state mine. Hideaway Hills SD
The state has trust fund from the mine to pay such claims. Instead, Noem refuses to help these people. They have suffered for over 4 years, some forced from their homes.

Noem engaged in political theater to send SD Guard Troops to the southern border, instead of helping flood victims in her own state.

Noem Funded a Political Action Committee, to go after her rivals and anyone who reported corruption. SD Strong PAC

Attached with in the letter sent to the Committee please find the relevant articles, videos and facts.

Noem is not a good choice for South Dakota, she would be horrible for Our Nation. Noem's history shows, she commits fraud waste and abuse on a monumental scale. Worse, is that she has knowingly retaliated against those who report fraud, waste, abuse, or corruption.

//James Bialota// Conservative American Patriot



SARAH ROOT

2016


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The Honorable Rand Paul
Chair, U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee

The Honorable Gary Peters
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee

January 14, 2025

Dear Chairman Paul and Ranking Member Peters,

GLAAD, the world's largest LGBTQ media advocacy organization, is reaching out to urge committee members to ask Governor Kristi Noem, nominee for United States Secretary of Homeland Security, about her record and policy positions that affect LGBTQ Americans.

This confirmation hearing presents a crucial opportunity to examine Gov. Noem's record and views on LGBTQ equality as well as her plans to address safety and security issues in her potential role as Secretary of Homeland Security. Gov. Noem's LGBTQ record is available here.

The Homeland Security Secretary has significant influence over policies that impact the safety and rights of all marginalized communities, including LGBTQ people. GLAAD has documented a sharp rise in anti-LGBTQ incidents and real world violence, including nearly a thousand incidents in 2024 such as assaults, vandalism, and bomb threats. Tragically, acts of violence resulted in at least 90 injuries and 7 deaths in 2024.

Here are some suggested questions:

Protection Against Hate Crimes
The Secretary of Homeland Security is responsible for implementing policies that strengthen the protection of LGBTQ individuals from hate crimes. This includes enforcing federal hate crime laws, such as the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which specifically includes sexual orientation and gender identity as protected categories.

- **Question:** What strategies would you propose to combat hate crimes against LGBTQ people and ensure their protection under federal law?
- **Question:** How would you work with local law enforcement agencies to enhance their understanding and response to crimes motivated by sexual orientation or gender identity?

Combating Violent Extremism in the US

Research consistently shows that violent extremist groups remain the most pressing national security concern in the US, including those that adhere to white nationalist and neo-Nazi ideologies. As Secretary of Homeland Security, you would directly oversee the US's efforts to combat homegrown hate-fueled violence and protect the marginalized communities which are so often targeted by this hate.

- **Question:** How do you plan to bolster hate-fueled violence prevention work through DHS? Will you, for example, commit to increased funding for grant programs for institutions working on this critical research?
- **Question:** What steps will you take to ensure that the surveillance and law enforcement capabilities of DHS are prioritized for violent groups, not to monitor political adversaries or discriminate against marginalized groups?

LGBTQ Rights in Federal Policy

As Governor you signed multiple laws in South Dakota that directly impacted the rights of transgender people, including banning transgender girls from participating in sports that align with their gender identity.

- **Question:** How do you reconcile your support for these policies with your responsibility to uphold the rights of all Americans as Secretary of Homeland Security?
- **Question:** What specific steps would you take to ensure that federal policies do not discriminate against LGBTQ people, specifically transgender and nonbinary people?

Impact on LGBTQ Youth

Research indicates that discriminatory policies contribute to mental health issues among LGBTQ youth. The Secretary of Homeland Security can influence policies that address broader issues impacting youth mental health, such as online safety and privacy. By advocating for legislation that protects youth from online harassment and bullying, the Secretary can help mitigate risks associated with social media use that adversely affect mental health.

- **Question:** As social media companies like Meta move towards platform policies that allow for the targeted harassment of LGBTQ users, how do you plan to fight online hate and harassment targeting LGBTQ Americans?
- **Question:** Given your past support for legislation that negatively affects transgender youth, how do you plan to address the mental health crisis among LGBTQ youth at a national level?
- **Question:** What measures would you implement to ensure that federal resources are directed towards supporting the mental health needs of LGBTQ youth?

International Human Rights

The role of Secretary of Homeland Security extends beyond national borders; it also influences U.S. foreign policy regarding human rights.

- **Question:** How would you advocate for LGBTQ rights in international contexts? What actions would you take to ensure that U.S. foreign aid does not support regimes that violate the rights of LGBTQ people?

Thank you for considering these questions during this important hearing. The safety and freedom of LGBTQ people depend on your engagement with the nominee and your ability to hold her accountable for her record and proposals.

Sincerely,



Sarah Kate Ellis,
President and CEO

SP
LC

Questions for Kristi Noem Confirmation Hearing

Background	Suggested Questions
Immigration For many decades, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and its predecessor agency, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), have had guidelines limiting routine civil immigration enforcement actions at or near schools, places of worship, funerals, and the like. This includes: • 1993: Memorandum from James A. Puleo, INS Acting Associate Commissioner, "Enforcement Activities at Schools, Places of Worship, or at funerals or other religious ceremonies," HQ 807-P (May 17, 1993); • 2007: Memorandum from Marcy M. Forman, Director, Office of Investigations, "Enforcement Actions at Schools," (December 26, 2007); • 2008: Memorandum from Julie L. Myers, Assistant Secretary, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), "Field Guidance on Enforcement Actions or Investigative Activities At or Near Sensitive Community Locations," 10029.1 (July 3, 2008); • 2011: Memorandum from John Morton, Director, ICE, "Enforcement Actions at or Focused on Sensitive Locations," 10029.2 (Oct. 24, 2011); • 2021: Memorandum from Alejandro N. Mayorkas, Secretary, DHS, "Guidelines for Enforcement Actions in or Near Protected Areas," (Oct. 27, 2021).	• During the first Trump administration, the Department of Homeland Security left in place longstanding guidance that generally limited routine immigration enforcement actions at or near sensitive locations. • If confirmed, will you keep in place the current guidelines that preserve the Department's ability to carry out its enforcement responsibilities and also show proper respect to these areas deserving of special protection? • Will you direct ICE to conduct enforcement operations in schools? In places of worship? In hospitals and other places providing medical care? In community centers or parks? In places where children gather outside of schools, such as boys and girls clubs?

• During the first Trump administration, the 2011 memorandum on sensitive locations was never rescinded. • Under the current 2021 guidelines, enforcement in or near a protected area is permitted without any approval from agency headquarters in exigent circumstances, including where it involves a national security threat; there is an imminent risk of death, violence, or physical harm to a person; it involves the hot pursuit of a person who is a threat to public safety or who was personally observed crossing the border; there is an imminent risk of the destruction of evidence material to a criminal case; or a safe alternative location cannot be located. The list is not exhaustive. Enforcement in non-exigent circumstances also is permitted but only with agency headquarters approval.	
• During natural disasters and other public health emergencies, DHS routinely informs the public that it will suspend enforcement actions—except where necessary to respond to a threat to public safety—in areas affected by such disasters as well as in places of refuge and relief. A collection of such announcements, including during the first Trump administration, is collected here.	• Will you direct or allow ICE to conduct enforcement operations in situations where people are fleeing a hurricane, wildfire, earthquake, or other natural disaster—or have been displaced by such an emergency and are trying to take care of their basic, immediate needs? • If confirmed, will you commit to continuing the longstanding practice of assuring the public that routine immigration enforcement actions will not take place in areas affected by natural disasters or other public health emergencies? • If confirmed, will you bring back the Remain in Mexico program (formally known as the Migration Protection Protocols)? Will you replicate the policy or practice of "metering" at ports of entry?
• In 2022, the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations released a bipartisan staff report on the "Medical Mistreatment of Women in ICE Detention." The report identified "serious issues" related to the Irwin County Detention Center (ICDC), which is owned and operated by	• Given the history of problems at the Irwin County facility, if confirmed will you commit to not returning ICE detainees to that facility? • LaSalle Corrections—the for-profit prison company that runs Irwin County and is responsible for medical care at the

LaSalle Corrections, including that female detainees were "subjected to excessive, invasive, and often unnecessary gynecological procedures." LaSalle was responsible for medical care at the facility and received regular grievances related to the poor medical care provided by its providers but it did nothing to correct the problems. • DHS removed all of its detainees from the facility in September 2021 and terminated its contract with LaSalle regarding ICDC the following month.	facility—fell down on the job and jeopardized the health and safety of women at the detention center. LaSalle Corrections also operates the Winn Correctional Center, a facility that was criticized heavily by the Department of Homeland Security's own Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties in 2021. That office recommended that no new detainees be placed in the facility and that the population be drawn down "until the most critical health and safety concerns" have been addressed. What steps will you take to review the performance of LaSalle Corrections to ensure that the health and safety of detained people—as well as staff working in these facilities—is protected? • DHS has been plagued for years with criticism about the poor treatment of detainees in its custody. Inadequate medical care, poor conditions, and preventable deaths. If confirmed, what specific steps will you take to ensure that people who are held in immigration detention during the pendency of their civil immigration proceedings are treated in a way that comports with our values and our laws, and how will you ensure accountability and transparency in these efforts?
• During the first Trump administration, Stephen Miller pushed the Department of Homeland Security to transfer migrants recently encountered at the border to "sanctuary cities" and release them into the streets to score political points. Top ICE officials described the proposal as "an unnecessary operational burden" that would create "liability" for the agency carrying out these unnecessary transfers. ICE's lawyers also concluded that the transfers involved unjustifiable expenditures and would be illegal.	• As Secretary of Homeland Security, you will have an obligation to uphold the law and act independent of the political considerations that can drive an administration. During the first Trump administration, when White House officials push the Department of Homeland Security to transfer people recently apprehended at the border to so-called "sanctuary" cities to make a splash and score political points, top ICE officials and ICE attorneys—including career civil servants dedicated to the mission of the Department—pushed back. If confirmed, will you commit to making decisions based on the law and sound policy even if that invites public and private pressure from the White House?

As of July 2023, 90 percent of people in ICE custody are being held in facilities that are owned or operated by private prison corporations. These private contracts generate enormous profits for private prison companies such as GEO Group and CoreCivic: • GEO Group made over $1 billion in revenue from ICE contracts alone in 2022 (nearly 50% of its entire revenue) • CoreCivic made over $550 million in revenue from ICE contracts in 2022 (30 percent of its entire revenue) Private facilities prioritize profits and as a result frequently take cost-saving actions that compromise the health and safety of those detained there. • A report that looked at 52 deaths in ICE custody between 2017 and 2021 found that 95% of those deaths would have been prevented had the person been provided with adequate medical care. • Private detention centers are not held to the same compliance as ones run by the government and private facilities has been called "most difficult to monitor and regulate" • Detention contractors are not subject to federal open record laws, civil service requirements, administrative law, constitutional requirements, and other legal checks that would apply to federal government officials doing the same work. • There is ample, well-documented evidence of human rights abuses in private facilities whose main objective is profit: • Complaint exposes torture and cruel and degrading treatment at Louisiana immigration detention center - Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights	• Do you agree that ensuring that people are housed in facilities where they are safe, healthy, and treated humanely is paramount and should always trump a company's quest for profits? • If confirmed, will you agree to end the practice of utilizing for-profit companies to run immigration detention centers? • Do you agree that privately run facilities should be held to all of the same standards and protocols as detention centers run by the government? • If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that these facilities must comply with the same standards and requirements?

• Policy Brief | Snapshot of ICE Detention: Inhumane Conditions and Alarming Expansion | National Immigrant Justice Center	
Associations with Militia Groups and Recruitment by Extremist Groups The Southern Poverty Law Center and other groups have documented efforts by unauthorized anti-immigration paramilitary vigilante groups, who have a record of harassment and intimidation of migrants, to collaborate with Border Patrol agents on the United States' southern border.	• Do you share my view that it is inappropriate for CBP agents to collaborate with private paramilitary vigilante groups who have engaged in harassment or intimidation of migrants? • Will you ensure that existing guidelines that prohibit engagements and interactions between CBP officials and unauthorized private paramilitary groups operating along our Southern Border are enforced? - •
Threats to the Homeland The 2025 Homeland Security Office of Intelligence and Analysis *Homeland Threat Assessment* report included this summary statement: Looking into 2025, the threat of violence from US-based violent extremists—including DVEs who are motivated by various ideologies and FTO-inspired homegrown violent extremists (HVEs)—will remain high. **The threat will continue to be characterized primarily by lone offenders or small cells motivated to violence by a combination of racial, religious, gender, or anti-government grievances; conspiracy theories; and personalized factors.** We particularly are concerned about the likelihood of violence motivated by developing domestic and global events, including the 2024 election cycle and the ongoing Israel-HAMAS conflict. A number of violent	• How would you assess the level of threat posed by white supremacist and other racial, religious, gender, or anti-government groups? • What do you see as the role of DHS in addressing the threat of political violence and protection of democracy, particularly election protection and ensuring the safe and free functioning of public government entities like schools, health boards, and city and state government? • Conspiracy theories play a significant role in recruitment and radicalization of domestic threats. The belief in these theories often creates more animus against the government and specific government officials within groups whose ideologies are already extreme. In some cases, this animus is targeted towards specific members of the government and is potentially violent. ○ What is your assessment of the threat posed by misinformation and false anti-government conspiracy theories?

extremists embrace multiple, sometimes competing motivations, challenging our ability to identify their potential targets in advance because their pre-attack statements online are often unrelated or only loosely related to the targets they ultimately choose.	○ What is the role of DHS in working to counter the impact of conspiratorial thinking and those who spread these untruths, including on social media platforms? • Previous efforts by DHS to counter violent domestic extremism inspired by foreign terrorist organizations were flawed, and plagued with issues of bias against Arab, Muslim, and South Asian communities that resulted in inappropriate targeting and surveillance. ○ How will you ensure civil liberties protections for all Americans in the course of your work to address the increase in domestic threats of violence and disruption?
White Supremacy in Federal Law Enforcement There is extensive documentation of efforts by white supremacist and extremist organizations to recruit active-duty military, veterans, and law enforcement officials – including reporting issued by the FBI. In November 2022, the *New York Times* Editorial Board published an editorial on the topic, including this quote: Federal standards or even guidelines about how to deal with extremism – in recruiting officers, disciplining existing ones or even sharing information – would go a long way toward harmonizing law enforcement's response. But carrying out such changes would require both local attention to detail and the political will to do so.	· Do you share my view that, for the more than 200,000 DHS law enforcement officials, active involvement in a white supremacist organization – or failing to act against targeted racial, antisemitic, or other bigoted harassment and intimidation – is incompatible with the mission of DHS? · How will you ensure that DHS does not hire or retain law enforcement officials who hold these views – or have demonstrated bias against persons based on race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), or disability"?