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COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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March 13, 2024

The Honorable Julie A. Su
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Acting Secretary Su:

The Committee on Education and the Workforce (Committee) is continuing its investigation of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) "Workers' Voice Summit" (Summit). This letter follows numerous attempts by the Committee to secure full responses from the Department of Labor (DOL) on this matter—including a duly executed subpoena that was served to you on November 21, 2023.¹ Your failure to comply with the subpoena and the Committee's previous requests is utterly beyond comprehension. This signals a new low for you and for DOL in not respecting Congress's duty to conduct oversight.

On December 7, 2023, the Committee sent an email to DOL memorializing that you were in breach of the Committee's November 21 subpoena.² Prior to that communication, the Committee held a Microsoft Teams call with DOL staff at DOL's request on November 29, 2023. The call was a forum to consider accommodations to items in the November 21, 2023, subpoena schedule of documents and the December 6, 2023, due date, with the understanding that DOL memorialize requests for accommodations in writing. Following the Teams call, DOL made no written requests for accommodations to modify the schedule of documents. Instead, rather than ask for an accommodation, on December 5, 2023, DOL sent an email notifying the Committee

¹ See Letter from Chairwoman Foxx to Martin J. Walsh, Sec'y of Lab. (Jan. 12, 2023), https://edworkforce.house.gov/uploadedfiles/01.12.23_follow_up_letter_dol.pdf; *Examining the Policies and Priorities of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Workforce Protections of the H. Comm. on Educ. & the Workforce*, 118th Cong. (2023) (question from Chairwoman Foxx), <https://edworkforce.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=409585>; Letter from Chairwoman Foxx to Julie A. Su, Acting Sec'y of Lab. (Oct. 23, 2023) (on file with Comm.); Subpoena from Chairwoman Foxx on behalf of H. Comm. on Ed. & the Workforce to Julie A. Su, Acting Sec'y of Lab. (Nov. 21, 2023), https://edworkforce.house.gov/uploadedfiles/osha_subpoena_updated.pdf.

² Email from Joe Wheeler, Comm. staff, to Daniel A. McGrath, Off. of Solic. of Lab. (SOL) (Dec. 12, 2023, 1:17 PM EST) (on file with Comm.).

that it “will not be able to meet the subpoena’s December 6th deadline”³ and that it will not be able to provide a “further response” until December 14, 2023.⁴ In response, the Committee indicated that it would be inclined to approve this request if DOL could commit to providing a full response.⁵ However, DOL failed to make this commitment. Instead, on the evening of December 6, 2023, DOL sent an email indicating that even in its December 14, 2023, “further response” to the Committee, it may not have complete responses to the Committee’s subpoena schedule of documents.⁶

The Committee received DOL’s “further response” on December 14, 2023.⁷ DOL’s timing of this production was clearly an intentional snub to the Committee as that was the date Members of Congress left Washington, D.C., having concluded their last day of business for the First Session of the 118th Congress. In addition to a cover letter, DOL’s response included only 45 pages—of which six pages were repeated materials from a previous production, and one page was entirely blank. While DOL’s December 14 production would have been lacking in its response to any congressional inquiry, it is even more inadequate given the Committee’s issuance of a subpoena to compel production. DOL’s failure to provide a meaningful response is an affront to anyone who expects accountability and transparency from their government.

In most respects, DOL’s production was deficient in responding to the items included in the Committee’s subpoena schedule, as delineated below.

1. Documents sufficient to show all Summit invitees and the organizations they represent;

DOL provided no documents sufficient to show all Summit invitees and the organizations they represented. In its December 14 letter, DOL says, “OSHA broadly disseminated its invitation to the summit,”⁸ implying that OSHA did not invite any specific person or group and that no documents should exist. DOL’s production included a “save the date” email, but it did not provide a list of email addresses or the recipients it intended to receive the email. Further, as DOL excluded requested information, it did not assert any privilege for its failure to do so.

2. Documents sufficient to show all Summit attendees and the organizations they represented;

DOL did not provide documents sufficient to show all Summit attendees and the organizations they represented. Instead, DOL produced a list of organizations affiliated with

³ Email from Daniel A. McGrath, SOL, to Joe Wheeler, Comm. staff (Dec. 5, 2023, 5:20 PM EST) (on file with Comm.).

⁴ Email from Daniel A. McGrath, SOL, to Joe Wheeler, Comm. staff (Dec. 6, 2023, 3:37 PM EST) (on file with Comm.).

⁵ Email from Joe Wheeler, Comm. staff, to Daniel A. McGrath, SOL (Dec. 6, 2023, 4:13 PM EST) (on file with Comm.).

⁶ Email from Daniel A. McGrath, SOL, to Joe Wheeler, Comm. staff (Dec. 6, 2023, 7:10 PM EST) (on file with Comm.).

⁷ Letter from Liz Watson, Asst. Sec’y. of Lab., to Chairwoman Foxx (Dec. 14, 2023) (on file with Comm.) (hereinafter “Dec. 14 letter”); attachment to letter from Liz Watson, Asst. Sec’y. of Lab., to Chairwoman Foxx (Dec. 14, 2023) (on file with Comm.) (hereinafter “Dec. 14 production”).

⁸ Dec. 14 letter, *supra* note 7, at 1.

attendees.⁹ In their conversations with Committee staff, DOL personnel expressed concerns that it is important not to make public its participants for privacy reasons, but DOL did not assert a privilege in its response. However, the Summit agenda referenced taking a group picture of Summit attendees, suggesting that privacy concerns were not an issue during the Summit.¹⁰

3. All documents and communications inviting individuals and organizations to attend the Summit;

Aside from the “save the date” email, DOL provided no other documents or communications relating to this request.¹¹ If additional documents and communications exist, DOL did not assert any privilege for its failure to provide them.

4. All remarks prepared for DOL staff;

While DOL provided remarks from OSHA Assistant Secretary Douglas Parker, it failed to provide the prepared remarks of a dozen other DOL staff members, including your remarks.¹² Instead, DOL provided presentation slides without offering further context.¹³ Despite its failure to provide all remarks prepared for DOL staff, the December 14 production did not assert any privilege for failing to do so.

5. All videos presented by DOL and OSHA staff to Summit attendees;

DOL provided a link to a 1 minute, 36 second YouTube video with then-Secretary of Labor Martin J. Walsh welcoming attendees.¹⁴ DOL’s narrative response attests that this was the only video made for the presentation.

6. Documents sufficient to show how the costs related to planning, holding, and conducting the Summit were funded and the source of any funds expended; and,

While DOL’s December 14 letter included an explanation about how the event was paid for, the additional materials provided no supporting documentation.¹⁵

7. All documents and communications referring or relating to the legal or ethical propriety of holding the Summit, including but not limited to those involving DOL’s Office of the Solicitor (SOL), any other executive branch ethics office, or any other appropriate authority.

⁹ Dec. 14 production, *supra* note 7, at 1-2.

¹⁰ *Id.* at 40.

¹¹ *Id.* at 3.

¹² *Id.* at 41-44.

¹³ *Id.* at 7-38.

¹⁴ *Id.* at 6.

¹⁵ Dec. 14 letter, *supra* note 7, at 1-2.

*While DOL's December 14 letter included language attesting to the legal and ethical propriety of holding the Summit, the production included none of the underlying documents and communications that would have been created for SOL personnel's consideration and review of the event.*¹⁶

While the December 14 production was consistent with DOL's continued refusal to provide full responses to the Committee about the Summit, it did provide additional context, raising further concerns about the event. Beyond merely being a Summit for workers to share their concerns with OSHA and to learn more about the agency, this multiday, closed-door, event was another example of the Biden administration mobilizing "all of government" for the specific benefit of organized labor. The Summit included the participation of the Secretary of Labor, the Deputy Secretary of Labor, the Solicitor of Labor, the General Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board, the Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and heads of four other DOL agencies that are far afield from OSHA matters.¹⁷ The prepared remarks of all DOL participants continue to be of interest to the Committee, and a duly served subpoena obligates you to provide them.

In addition, even if it is accurate that the Summit was not meant to be a political pep rally, the closed-door nature of the event raises its own concerns. In his August 12, 2022, "save the date" email, Assistant Secretary Parker said, "The purpose of this event is to lift worker's voices, strengthen our relations with other organizations, identify trends and problems impacting workers and develop a plan to address them," and "We hope you will consider joining us to discuss these important issues so we can set priorities and develop a worker focused plan for the coming year."¹⁸ It is concerning to the Committee that OSHA would be setting priorities and developing plans without a broader range of stakeholders. Further, the Committee is interested in learning specifically what OSHA did following the Summit to determine its agenda for 2023 and beyond.

Finally, OSHA was engaged in rulemaking on 27 issues at the time of the Summit, including eight that were in the final rulemaking stage.¹⁹ The *Administrative Procedure Act* does not preclude DOL from communicating with stakeholders in forums such as the Summit. However, the Committee understands that DOL's policy on *ex parte* communications obligates DOL to summarize any *ex parte* contacts and disclose them in the public docket.²⁰ The Committee is unaware of OSHA or any other agency that participated in the Summit having made public disclosures about *ex parte* communications that occurred.

DOL's December 14 "further response" did not fulfill or absolve you of your obligation to respond to the Committee's subpoena. The Committee still expects you to provide complete

¹⁶ *Id.* at 2.

¹⁷ Dec. 14 production, *supra* note 7, at 39-40, 42.

¹⁸ *Id.* at 3.

¹⁹ OFF. OF MGMT. & BUDGET, OFF. OF INFO. & REGUL. AFF., AGENCY RULE LIST - FALL 2022, DOL.

²⁰ ESA L. SFERRA-BONISTALLI, ADMIN. CONF. OF THE U.S., EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS IN INFORMAL RULEMAKING 53-54 (May 1, 2014), <https://www.acus.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2014-4%20Report.pdf>.

productions following the subpoena schedule of documents. I demand that you provide this specific information:

1. A complete list of all Summit attendees (including both in-person and virtual attendees) and the organizations they represented;
2. All remarks prepared for DOL staff;
3. All documents and communications referring or relating to the legal or ethical propriety of holding the Summit, including but not limited to those involving SOL, any other executive branch ethics office, or any other appropriate authority;
4. Summaries of what OSHA or any other DOL agency did following the Summit to set priorities and develop plans for 2023 and beyond; and
5. Summaries OSHA or any other DOL agency disclosed in the public docket related to any *ex parte* contacts made on pending rules during the Summit.

Rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives authorizes the Committee to conduct oversight of matters involving the organization, administration, and general management of DOL to inform potential legislation.²¹ The Committee's investigation on the propriety of the Summit is within the Committee's jurisdiction and is a "subject on which legislation 'could be had.'"²²

Please respond pursuant to the Committee's November 21, 2023, subpoena compelling you to provide the documents and communications delineated in its attached schedule of documents and the additional requests made in this letter by no later than March 27, 2024.

Sincerely,



Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman

Enclosure

²¹ RULES OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 6, 7, 9-12 (118th Cong.) (Jan. 10, 2023).

²² *Trump v. Mazars USA, LLP*, 140 S.Ct. 2019, 2031 (2020) (internal citations omitted).

Responding to Committee Document Requests

1. The agency's response to questions and request(s) should be answered or provided in separate document and not included inside a narrative response.
2. In complying with this request, you should produce all responsive documents that are in your agency's possession, custody, or control, whether held by you or other past or present employees of the executive branch, or a representative acting on your behalf. Your response should also produce documents that you have a legal right to obtain, that the agency has a right to copy or to which you have access, or that you have placed in the temporary possession, custody, or control of any third party.
3. Records, documents, data or information that have been requested and/or are related to underlying requests should not be destroyed, modified, removed, transferred or otherwise made inaccessible to the Committee on Education and the Workforce (the "Committee").
4. If any entity, organization or individual denoted in this request has been, or is also known by any other name than that herein denoted, the request shall be read also to include that alternative identification.
5. The Committee's preference is to receive documents in electronic form (i.e., email, CD, memory stick, or thumb drive) in lieu of paper productions. To the extent responses are provided in paper form, any documents that are stapled, clipped, or otherwise fastened together should not be separated. Documents produced in response to a request should be produced together with copies of file labels, dividers, or identifying markers with which they were associated when this request was issued.
6. Regardless of format, documents produced pursuant to this request should be produced in the order in which they appear in your files and should not be rearranged. Indicate the office or division and person from whose files each document was produced.
7. Regardless of format, documents produced to the Committee should include an index describing the contents of the production and a total page count for the entire production. To the extent more than one CD, hard drive, memory stick, thumb drive, box or folder is produced, each CD, hard drive, memory stick, thumb drive, box, or folder should contain an index describing its contents. Documents produced in electronic format should also be identified and indexed electronically.
8. Electronic document productions should be prepared according to the following standards:
 - (a) The production should consist of single page Tagged Image File ("TIF"), files accompanied by a Concordance-format load file, an Opticon reference file, and a file defining the fields and character lengths of the load file.
 - (b) Document numbers in the load file should match document Bates numbers and TIF file names.

(c) If the production is completed through a series of multiple partial productions, field names and file order in all load files should match.

9. All documents shall be Bates-stamped sequentially and produced sequentially.
10. When you produce documents, you should individually identify the paragraph, question number or request number in the Committee's request to which the documents respond.
11. It shall not be a basis for refusal to produce documents that any other person or entity—either inside or outside of the executive branch—also possesses non-identical or identical copies of the same documents.
12. If any of the requested information is only reasonably available in machine-readable form (such as on a computer server, hard drive, or computer backup tape), the agency's staff should consult with the Committee staff to determine the appropriate format in which to produce the information.
13. If compliance with any request cannot be made in full, compliance shall be made to the extent possible and shall include a written explanation of why full compliance is not possible.
14. If the agency does not expect to produce all documents responsive to a request by the date requested, the agency's staff shall consult with the Committee as soon as it is known the agency cannot meet the deadline, but no later than 24 hours before the due date to explain:
 - (a) what will be provided by the due date;
 - (b) why the agency believes certain materials cannot be produced by the due date; and
 - (c) the agency's proposed timeline for providing any omitted information.
15. If any document responsive to this request was, but no longer is, in your possession, custody, or control, or has been placed into the possession, custody, or control of any third party and cannot be provided in response to this request, you should:
 - (a) identify the document, including its date, author, subject, and recipients;
 - (b) explain the circumstances under which the document ceased to be in your possession, custody, or control, or was placed in the possession, custody, or control of a third party;
 - (c) state how the document was disposed of;
 - (d) identify the name, current address, and telephone number of the person who currently has possession, custody or control over the document;
 - (e) state the date of disposition; and

- (f) identify the name, current address, and telephone number of each person who authorized said disposition or who had or has knowledge of said disposition.
16. If any document responsive to this request cannot be located, identify the document and describe with particularity the efforts made to locate the document and the specific reason for its disappearance, destruction or unavailability.
17. In the event that a document or portion of a document is withheld on the basis of privilege, provide a privilege log containing the following information concerning any such document or redaction:
- (a) Bates number(s);
 - (b) the privilege asserted and the grounds therefor;
 - (c) the type of document;
 - (d) the general subject matter;
 - (e) any other description necessary to identify the document;
 - (f) the date, author, and addressee; and
 - (g) the relationship of the author and addressee to each other.

If a claimed privilege applies to only a portion of any document, that portion only should be withheld and the remainder of the document should be produced.

18. Any objections or claims of privilege are waived if you fail to provide an explanation of why full compliance is not possible and a log identifying with specificity the ground(s) for withholding each withheld document prior to the request compliance date.
19. In complying with the request, be apprised that (unless otherwise determined by the Committee) the Committee does not recognize: any purported non-disclosure privileges associated with the common law including, but not limited to, the deliberative-process privilege, the attorney-client privilege, and attorney work product protections; any purported privileges or protections from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act; or any purported contractual privileges, such as non-disclosure agreements.
20. Any assertion by a request recipient of any such non-constitutional legal bases for withholding documents or other materials, for refusing to answer any deposition question, or for refusing to provide hearing testimony, shall be of no legal force and effect and shall not provide a justification for such withholding or refusal, unless and only to the extent that the Committee (or the chair of the Committee, if authorized) has consented to recognize the assertion as valid.

21. If a date or other descriptive detail set forth in this request referring to a document, communication, meeting, or other event is inaccurate, but the actual date or other descriptive detail is known to you or other agency employees, or is otherwise apparent from the context of the request, you should produce all documents that would be responsive as if the date or other descriptive detail were correct.
22. The time period covered by this request is included in the attached request. To the extent a time period is not specified, produce relevant documents from January 20, 2021 to the present.
23. This request is continuing in nature and applies to any newly-discovered information. Any record, document, compilation of data or information, not produced because it has not been located or discovered by the return date, shall be produced immediately upon subsequent location or discovery. Such submission shall include an explanation as to why the information was not produced originally.
24. If physical documents are to be delivered, two sets of documents should be delivered, one set to the Majority Staff in Room 2176 of the Rayburn House Office Building and one set to the Minority Staff in Room 2101 of the Rayburn House Office Building during Committee office hours (9am-5pm, unless other arrangements are made) and signed by members of the respective staffs upon delivery.
25. Upon completion of the document production, the agency's written response should include a written certification, signed by the Secretary or his or her designee, stating that:
 - (a) a diligent search has been completed of all documents in your possession, custody, or control that reasonably could contain responsive documents; and
 - (b) all documents located during the search that are responsive have been produced to the Committee.

Definitions

1. The term "document" means any written, recorded, or graphic matter of any nature whatsoever, regardless of how recorded, and whether original or copy, including, but not limited to, the following: memoranda, reports, expense reports, books, manuals, instructions, financial reports, working papers, records, notes, letters, notices, confirmations, telegrams, receipts, appraisals, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, prospectuses, inter-office and intra-office communications, electronic mail (e-mail), contracts, cables, notations of any type of conversation, telephone call, meeting or other communication, bulletins, printed matter, computer printouts, teletypes, invoices, transcripts, diaries, analyses, returns, summaries, minutes, bills, accounts, estimates, projections, comparisons, messages, correspondence, press releases, circulars, financial statements, reviews, opinions, offers, studies and investigations, questionnaires and surveys, and work sheets (and all drafts, preliminary versions, alterations, modifications, revisions, changes, and amendments of any of the foregoing, as well as any attachments or appendices thereto), and graphic or oral records or representations of any kind (including without limitation, photographs, charts, graphs,

microfiche, microfilm, videotape, recordings and motion pictures), and electronic, mechanical, and electric records or representations of any kind (including, without limitation, tapes, cassettes, disks, and recordings) and other written, printed, typed, or other graphic or recorded matter of any kind or nature, however produced or reproduced, and whether preserved in writing, film, tape, disk, videotape or otherwise. A document bearing any notation not a part of the original text is to be considered a separate document. A draft or non-identical copy is a separate document within the meaning of this term.

2. The term “documents in your possession, custody or control” means documents that are in your possession, custody, or control, whether held by you or your past or present agents, employees, or representatives acting on your behalf; documents that you have a legal right to obtain, that you have a right to copy, or to which you have access; and/or documents that have been placed in the possession, custody, or control of any third party.
3. The term “communication” means each manner or means of disclosure or exchange of information, regardless of means utilized, whether oral, electronic, by document or otherwise, and whether in a meeting, by telephone, facsimile, email, regular mail, telexes, releases, or otherwise.
4. The terms “and” and “or” shall be construed broadly and either conjunctively or disjunctively to bring within the scope of this request any information which might otherwise be construed to be outside its scope. The singular includes plural number, and vice versa. The masculine includes the feminine and neuter genders.
5. The terms “person” or “persons” mean natural persons, firms, partnerships, associations, corporations, subsidiaries, divisions, departments, joint ventures, proprietorships, syndicates, or other legal, business or government entities, and all subsidiaries, affiliates, divisions, departments, branches, or other units thereof.
6. The term “identify,” when used in a question about individuals, means to provide the following information: (a) the individual's complete name and title; and (b) the individual's business address and phone number.
7. The term “referring or relating,” with respect to any given subject, means anything that constitutes, contains, embodies, reflect s, identifies, states, refers to, deals with or is pertinent to that subject in any manner whatsoever.
8. The term “agency” means any department, independent establishment, or corporation of the federal government. For the purposes of responding to oversight requests, the Committee expects information to be provided from all sub-agencies of an agency and not just the information that is immediately available to the addressee or the addressee’s immediate sub-agency.
9. The term “privilege” includes, but is not limited to, any claim that a document either may or must be withheld from production pursuant to any statute, rule, or regulation.

10. The term “employee” means agent, borrowed employee, casual employee, consultant, de facto employee, joint adventurer, loaned employee, part-time employee, permanent employee, provisional employee, contract employee, contractor, or any other type of service provider.
11. The term “Administration” means and refers to any department, agency, division, office, subdivision, entity, official, administrator, employee, attorney, agent, advisor, consultant, staff, or any other person acting on behalf or under the control or direction of the Executive Branch.
12. “You” or “your” means and refers to you as a natural person and the United States and any of its agencies, offices, subdivisions, entities, officials, administrators, employees, attorneys, agents, advisors, consultants, staff, contractors, or any other persons acting on your behalf or under your control or direction; and includes any other person(s) defined in the document request letter.