

United States Senate

July 28, 2026

The Honorable Todd Blanche
Acting Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

The Honorable Markwayne Mullin
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Acting Attorney General Blanche, Secretary Mullin, and Secretary Hegseth:

Senior Trump administration officials have repeatedly refused to rule out deploying federal law enforcement officers at November 2026 mid-term election polling places and other election sites, despite such action being illegal under federal law. President Trump himself has publicly advocated an unprecedented — indeed, unconstitutional — federal takeover of state-run elections. And, after initially telling a federal court that your Departments possessed essentially no records concerning federal agents or troops at the polls, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) now acknowledges possessing thousands of potentially responsive records that remain hidden from public view. Congress and the American people must know — now — whether the Trump administration is planning to use armed federal officers at the polls and for what purpose.

Rather than assuaging public concern about the Administration's intentions, its highest-ranking officials have consistently left open the possibility of armed federal law enforcement officers policing polling places, which federal law expressly prohibits.¹ In March, at the

¹ See 18 U.S.C. §§ 592-595.

Conservative Political Action Conference, Acting Attorney General Blanche rhetorically asked: “Why is there an objection to sending ICE to polling stations?”² Just days ago, during his Senate confirmation hearing, he repeatedly declined to assure Congress that the Department of Justice would not deploy armed federal agents to polling places, responding only that he would “follow the law.”³ Likewise, in March, at his confirmation hearing, Secretary Mullin testified that he might send armed federal law enforcement to the polls “if there was a specific threat.”⁴ But he could neither articulate such a threat nor explain how it would supersede federal law barring armed law enforcement at the polls.⁵ And in May, in similar testimony before the House Armed Services Committee and the Senate Armed Services Committee, Secretary Hegseth refused to say whether he would deploy troops to polling places.⁶

For his part, in February, President Trump said: “The Republicans should say, ‘We want to take over. We should take over the voting in at least — many, 15 places.’ The Republicans ought to nationalize the voting.”⁷ But under the Constitution, states run elections, not the federal government.⁸ In May, when President Trump was asked whether he would send the National Guard or ICE to polling places in November, he refused to rule it out, responding: “I’d do anything necessary to make sure we have honest elections.”⁹ And earlier this month, President Trump delivered a prime-time address to the nation in which he repeated outlandish falsehoods about the 2020 election, continuing to sow doubts about voting integrity ahead of the mid-terms.¹⁰

President Trump’s statements, coupled with his repeated threats to invoke the Insurrection Act — which authorizes the president to deploy military forces inside the United States to

² Rebecca Beitsch, *Blanche: ‘Why is there objection to sending ICE officers to polling places?’*, The Hill (Mar. 27, 2026), <https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/5803874-todd-blanche-immigration-enforcement-polling-places-2026-election/>.

³ Jacob Knutson, *Blanche says he will ‘follow the law’ on ICE agents at polls but won’t pledge not to deploy them*, Democracy Docket (July 15, 2026), <https://www.democracymarket.com/news-alerts/todd-blanche-federal-agents-voting-sites-confirmation-hearing/>.

⁴ Natalie Hausmann, *Trump’s pick for DHS chief won’t rule out ICE at polls* (Mar. 18, 2026), <https://www.democracymarket.com/news-alerts/trump-dhs-pick-wont-rule-out-ice-at-polls/>.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Steve Benen, *In sworn testimony, Hegseth pushed false claim about troops deployed to voting precincts*, MSNOW (May 5, 2026), <https://www.ms.now/rachel-maddow-show/maddowblog/in-sworn-testimony-hegseth-pushed-false-claim-about-troops-deployed-to-voting-precincts>.

⁷ Jane C. Timm, *Trump says Republicans should ‘nationalize’ elections*, NBC News (Feb. 2, 2026), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/elections/trump-republicans-nationalize-elections-rcna257098>.

⁸ See U.S. Const. art. I, § 4, cl. 1.

⁹ Matthew Kupfer, *‘Anything necessary’: Trump won’t rule out sending troops to polls*, Democracy Docket (May 12, 2026), <https://www.democracymarket.com/news-alerts/anything-necessary-trump-wont-rule-out-sending-troops-to-polls/>.

¹⁰ Catherine Lucey and Courtney Subramian, *Trump Sows US Election Doubts in Speech Before Midterms*, Bloomberg News (July 17, 2026), <https://news.bgov.com/bloomberg-government-news/trump-stokes-doubts-on-us-election-security-in-combative-speech>.

suppress rebellion or domestic violence — only heighten concerns.¹¹ His remarks raise a serious question about whether the Administration believes it possesses emergency authority to deploy federal personnel in connection with the administration of the November election. Congress is entitled to know whether any such legal theory has been developed, considered, or is in the process of being implemented.

The idea that the Administration might send law enforcement officers or troops to the polls became even more concerning when — in litigation seeking records about possible polling-place deployments — the Administration abruptly reversed its position that it had no responsive documents. Beginning in October 2025, the Democratic National Committee submitted eleven Freedom of Information Act requests seeking records concerning the possible deployment of federal law enforcement officers, immigration agents, military personnel, or National Guard members to polling places, ballot-drop locations, and election offices.¹² Your Departments initially produced virtually nothing. During the ensuing litigation, ICE first represented that it had located no responsive records. But earlier this month, after its searches were challenged, ICE acknowledged finding more than 11,000 potentially responsive pages and U.S. Customs and Border Protection said it had turned up almost 117,000 records.¹³ The documents have yet to be produced to the plaintiff for review.

These belated disclosures reinforce the fear that the Administration is planning a potentially unlawful, illegal, and unconstitutional intrusion into the November election. Congress has enacted longstanding criminal prohibitions against sending federal personnel to polling places and using federal power to interfere with elections.¹⁴ For example, federal law makes it a crime for a federal official to bring or keep troops or armed personnel at a place where an election is held.¹⁵ Americans should never have to wonder whether the federal government intends to police the ballot box with armed agents. Yet that is precisely what the Trump administration appears to be considering, if not planning.

The Administration now has a choice. It can continue to fuel the appearance that it is laying the groundwork for an unprecedented federal intrusion into state-run elections, or it can finally provide Congress and the American people with the transparency they deserve. Accordingly, please respond to the following questions in writing no later than August 11, 2026:

¹¹ 10 U.S.C. §§ 251-255; Juliana Kim and Alana Wise, *Trump threatened to invoke the Insurrection Act (again). What is it?*, NPR (Jan. 15, 2026), <https://www.npr.org/2026/01/15/nx-s1-5678612/minneapolis-insurrection-act-trump-threats>.

¹² Caroline Vakil, *DNC sues Trump administration for any plans to deploy federal agents at polling sites*, The Hill (Mar. 10, 2026), <https://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/5776623-dnc-sues-trump-election-plans/>.

¹³ Joint Status Report, *Democratic Nat'l Comm. v. U.S. Dep't of Justice*, No. 1:26-cv-00825 (D.D.C. July 11, 2026); Jacob Knutson, *ICE reverses, admits it may have trove of documents on agents at polling places*, Democracy Docket (Jul 14, 2026), <https://www.democracymarket.com/news-alerts/ice-agents-polling-places-documents-democrats-foia-demand/>.

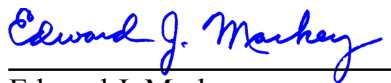
¹⁴ See 18 U.S.C. §§ 592-595.

¹⁵ See *id.* § 592.

1. Will any federal law enforcement officers or troops be deployed to or near any polling place or other election sites during the November 2026 election? If so, identify who, where, under what authority, and for what purpose.
2. Who directed or authorized discussions concerning the possible deployment of federal law enforcement officers or troops to polling places or other election sites? Identify every meeting or communication concerning this subject involving your Department or agency and the White House, the Executive Office of the President, Stephen Miller, other presidential advisers, or any other federal entity.
3. Produce all records concerning the possible deployment of federal law enforcement personnel or troops to polling places or other election sites, including legal memoranda, operational plans, policy guidance, emails, text messages, meeting notes, directives, and communications with the White House or other federal entities.

The Administration's own actions have created the appearance that it may be preparing to do something that Congress has expressly prohibited: sending federal law enforcement officers or troops to polling places. If that is something the Administration is not going to do, you should have no difficulty saying so and proving it through complete transparency.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Andy Kim
United States Senator



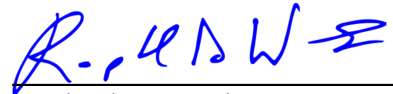
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



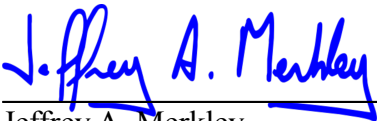
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Angela D. Alsobrooks
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator