

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 19, 2018

The Honorable Mick Mulvaney  
Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
725 17th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. Mulvaney:

We are writing to gain a better understanding of how Administration policy regarding travel of executive branch officials has been enforced and overseen following the issuance of the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) travel memorandum on September 29, 2017.<sup>1</sup> Given recent media reports of Cabinet members incurring excessive expenses in their taxpayer-funded travel, it appears that there could be a continued lack of compliance with both the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) and Administration policy.<sup>2</sup> The Inspectors General for the Environmental Protection Agency,<sup>3</sup> the Department of the Treasury,<sup>4</sup> the Department of the Interior,<sup>5</sup> and the Department of Veterans Affairs<sup>6</sup> have investigated or are currently investigating the travel expenses and practices of their highest-ranking officials.

In order for Congress to better understand the current state of compliance with federal statutes and regulations, we respectfully ask for answers to the following questions on or before April 6, 2018:

1. How has OMB increased its oversight of Cabinet-level travel since the publication of the September 29, 2017 memorandum?

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<sup>1</sup> Memorandum from OMB Director Mick Mulvaney, *Travel on Government-Owned, Rented, Leased, or Chartered Aircraft* (September 29, 2017) (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/omb/memoranda/2017/m-17-32.pdf>).

<sup>2</sup> *The Trump Cabinet is traveling in style. Thanks, taxpayers!*, CNN (February 16, 2018) (<https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/16/politics/trump-administration-expensive-travel/index.html>).

<sup>3</sup> *EPA inspector general now investigating Pruitt's use of military, private flights*, Washington Post (October 6, 2017) ([https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/10/06/epa-inspector-general-expands-investigation-of-pruitts-use-of-military-private-flights/?utm\\_term=.6ca403d88eb6](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/10/06/epa-inspector-general-expands-investigation-of-pruitts-use-of-military-private-flights/?utm_term=.6ca403d88eb6)).

<sup>4</sup> *Inspector general launches second review of Steven Mnuchin's travels*, CNN Money (October 11, 2017) (<http://money.cnn.com/2017/10/10/news/economy/treasury-inspector-general-mnuchin-travel/index.html>).

<sup>5</sup> *U.S. Interior Secretary fails to provide papers in travel probe: inspector*, Reuters (November 16, 2017) (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-interior-zinke/u-s-interior-secretary-fails-to-provide-papers-in-travel-probe-inspector-idUSKBN1DG38Z>).

<sup>6</sup> *Veterans Affairs chief Shulkin, staff misled ethics officials about European trip, report finds*, Washington Post (February 14, 2018) ([https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/veterans-affairs-chief-shulkin-staff-misled-ethics-officials-about-european-trip-report-finds/2018/02/14/f7fbc020-0c3a-11e8-8b0d-891602206fb7\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.53c77ac5a685](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/veterans-affairs-chief-shulkin-staff-misled-ethics-officials-about-european-trip-report-finds/2018/02/14/f7fbc020-0c3a-11e8-8b0d-891602206fb7_story.html?utm_term=.53c77ac5a685)).

2. Has OMB promulgated any policies, circulars, memoranda, or other guidance since September 29, 2017, regarding official travel by members of the Cabinet? If so, please provide a copy of each of these documents.
3. Has OMB reviewed guidance pertaining to the use of government-owned, rented, leased, and chartered aircraft? If so, what were the results of that review? What changes, if any, were made to existing controls?
4. Has the White House Chief of Staff developed a process by which to approve all travel on Government-owned, rented, leased, or chartered aircraft in cases that are not exempt from situations defined in Circular A-126 or for non-full-time required use travelers?
5. Please provide an accounting of all travel approved by the White House Chief of Staff since September 29, 2017.
6. Some Cabinet-level officials have reportedly been uncooperative in providing information necessary for the Inspectors General to thoroughly investigate agency travel expenses and practices. Has OMB provided any formal or informal guidance to any agency with respect to agency participation in IG travel inquiries? If so, please provide a copy of the guidance.

It is our duty to provide oversight and ensure that taxpayer money is spent responsibly, without waste, fraud, or abuse. As you have said yourself about past issues with Administration travel, “just because something is legal doesn’t make it right.” We owe it to the American people to ensure with the utmost vigilance that tax dollars are being spent appropriately. We thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator



Joni K. Ernst  
United States Senator