

# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

May 4, 2026

## VIA EMAIL

Ms. Jessica Bowron  
Comptroller, Exercising the Delegated Authority of the Director  
National Park Service  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Bowron:

I write regarding troubling new reports that the National Park Service awarded a no-bid contract to Clark Construction Group, LLC to conduct restoration work and repair two water fountains at Lafayette Park, located across the street from the White House. These reports are even more alarming in light of Clark Construction's recent selection as the lead builder of President Trump's \$400 million White House ballroom, a role that involves a contract of undisclosed, yet presumably lucrative, value.<sup>1</sup> Your agency's decision to authorize ballooning payments to Clark Construction and the circumstances of this recent contract to renovate Lafayette Park raise troubling questions about whether you are channeling excess taxpayer dollars to Clark Construction as an undisclosed reward for its central role in President Trump's preferred vanity project.

In 2022, the National Park Service estimated that the work to repair two ornamental fountains in Lafayette Park would cost approximately \$3.3 million.<sup>2</sup> Yet, earlier this year, your agency agreed to pay Clark Construction \$11.9 million to perform that same work, and made iterative increases in the scope of the project resulting in a total award of more than \$17 million.<sup>3</sup> The National Park Service assigned the contract to Clark Construction without opening the project to competitive bidding as required by federal procurement law, invoking an "urgency" exception intended to be used in the event of wars and natural disasters.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> David A. Fahrenthold, Luke Broadwater, & Andrea Fuller, *Firm Building Trump's Ballroom Got a Secret No-Bid Contract for a Nearby Job*, N. Y. TIMES (Apr. 25, 2026) <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/04/25/us/politics/lafayette-park-fountains-trump-contract.html>.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*; Press Release, White House, The White House Announces White House Ballroom Construction to Begin (Jul. 31, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/2025/07/the-white-house-announces-white-house-ballroom-construction-to-begin/>.

<sup>4</sup> David A. Fahrenthold, Luke Broadwater, & Andrea Fuller, *Firm Building Trump's Ballroom Got a Secret No-Bid Contract for a Nearby Job*, N. Y. TIMES (Apr. 25, 2026) <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/04/25/us/politics/lafayette-park-fountains-trump-contract.html>.

Granting a contract with such excessively inflated value is troubling on its own. But these reports are even more alarming in light of the National Park Service's lack of transparency regarding the construction of the White House ballroom. On October 23, 2025, I wrote to the National Park Service along with other Senators requesting information on how President Trump's ballroom would be built and paid for.<sup>5</sup> The National Park Service's April 28, 2026 response was entirely inadequate, providing no details on the construction or funding of the ballroom. The National Park Service's conduct and failure to respond adequately to my prior request raises questions as to whether it is fulfilling the "stewardship and compliance support functions" that your agency highlighted in its response to my letter.<sup>6</sup>

The American people deserve to know whether excess taxpayer dollars are being used—without the authorization of Congress—to reward the President's preferred partners. To assist the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations in its inquiry, please preserve all records<sup>7</sup> and communications<sup>8</sup> related to the renovation of Lafayette Park, and provide specific responses to the following questions by May 18, 2026:

1. What was the justification used by the National Park Service to determine that the contract for renovation of Lafayette Park should be awarded without a competitive bidding process?
2. When were the initial plans for the renovation of Lafayette Park submitted to and approved by the National Park Service?
3. When did you select Clark Construction for the renovation of Lafayette Park, and upon what basis?
4. What were the terms of the agreement(s) you entered into with Clark Construction regarding the renovation of Lafayette Park?
5. Please produce all cost estimates for the renovation of Lafayette Park prepared from 2021 to the present. Upon what basis have the costs of the renovation increased over time?

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<sup>5</sup> Letter from the Hon. Richard Blumenthal, Hon. Elizabeth Warren, Hon. Ron Wyden, Hon. Chris Van Hollen, and Hon Edward J. Markey to Jessica Bowron Comptroller and Delegated Director, National Park Service and Catherine Townsend, President and CEO, Trust for the National Mall (Oct. 23, 2025) [https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/ballroom\\_letter\\_to\\_the\\_trust\\_on\\_the\\_national\\_mall\\_and\\_the\\_national\\_parks\\_service.pdf](https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/ballroom_letter_to_the_trust_on_the_national_mall_and_the_national_parks_service.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Letter from Jessica Bowron Comptroller and Delegated Director, National Park Service to Hon. Richard Blumenthal, Ranking Member, S. Permanent Subcomm. on Investigations (Apr. 28, 2026) (see attachment).

<sup>7</sup> For purposes of this request, "records" include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (emails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), direct messages, chats, calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).

<sup>8</sup> For purposes of this request, "communications" include any records, as defined above, transmitted in any way between two or more individuals or entities.

Ms. Jessica Bowron  
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Please contact the Subcommittee if you have any questions about responding to these requests.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal  
Ranking Member  
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

cc: The Honorable Ron Johnson  
Chairman  
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Blumenthal:

The National Park Service (NPS) received your letter regarding the East Wing Modernization and State Ballroom project at the White House. This letter clarifies NPS's role and responsibilities regarding this project.

Congress established the White House and its grounds as a unit of the National Park System in 1961 and directed the NPS to manage the site within President's Park. The White House's enabling legislation expressly mandates that NPS management not conflict with the administration of the Executive Office of the President or with the use and occupancy of the buildings and grounds as the home of the President and for official purposes. Consistent with this framework, the NPS provides stewardship and compliance support functions, while the Executive Office of the President retains authority over operational needs, security requirements, and decisions related to the conduct of official presidential functions.

Planning documents predating the current administration, including the Comprehensive Design Plan for the White House and President's Park (2000), identified the need for expanded event space as an ongoing priority. The absence of a permanent indoor venue capable of hosting large official functions without relying on temporary tents and infrastructure has long been recognized as a limitation at the White House. For decades, administrations have used temporary structures on the South Lawn to accommodate state dinners and similar events. These temporary installations impact the grounds, underground utilities, and visitor experience, and introduce avoidable logistical and security challenges. In this context, the Executive Office of the President determined that modernizing the East Wing and constructing a State Ballroom were necessary to meet its current and future operational needs for a permanent, secure venue for large official events and established the functional requirements for such a facility.

The project is currently the subject of active litigation, *National Trust for Historic Preservation v. National Park Service*, No. 1:25-cv-04316 (D.D.C.). In light of the pending judicial proceedings, it would be inappropriate for the NPS to comment further on matters currently before the court. The NPS remains committed to complying fully with all applicable legal requirements and will continue to address project-related issues through the judicial process.

A similar response will be sent to the co-signers of your letter.

Sincerely,

Date: 2026.04.28  
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Jessica Bowron  
Comptroller, Exercising the Delegated  
Authority of the Director, National Park Service