

# U.S. Sens. Johnson, Hawley, Colleagues: Letter demanding DHS release documents on Disinformation Governance Board

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**WASHINGTON** – On Monday, U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), member of the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, joined U.S. Sen. Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) and three of their Republican colleagues in a letter to Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas requesting the immediate release of all documents related to the agency’s recently-shelved Disinformation Governance Board. Under federal law (5 U.S.C. § 2954), the Department is required to provide information and documents to the Homeland Security Committee when five members request it.

“We write to request immediate access to all records and communications related to the Department of Homeland Security’s new Disinformation Governance Board. You promised under oath to make these records available, but to date, our offices still have not received any further information,” **the senators wrote.**

“We were pleased to read reports that you have decided to shut down the board in response to the concerns we raised. But it is important that this mistake is not repeated. We are therefore demanding transparency into the Department’s decision-making process so that we can learn why the Department ever thought creating a disinformation board would be a good idea,” **the senators continued.**

Sens. Johnson and Hawley were joined on the letter by Senators Rick Scott (R-Fla.), Rand Paul (R-Ky.) and James Lankford (R-Okla.).

The full text of the letter can be found [here](#) or below.

May 23, 2022

Dear Secretary Mayorkas,

We write to request immediate access to all records and communications related to the Department of Homeland Security's new Disinformation Governance Board. You promised under oath to make these records available, but to date, our offices still have not received any further information. We were pleased to read reports that you have decided to shut down the board in response to the concerns we raised. But it is important that this mistake is not repeated. We are therefore demanding transparency into the Department's decision-making process so that we can learn why the Department ever thought creating a disinformation board would be a good idea.

On May 4, 2022, you testified before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee about the creation of this new board and accepted sole responsibility for appointing Nina Jankowicz as its Executive Director. Surprisingly, you testified that you were not aware of her long history of partisan public statements.

You also testified under oath that you would produce to the Committee all records

related to the Board, including its formation and appointment of personnel. You testified, “I owe openness and transparency with this Committee, and we will produce the documents that you have requested, unless there’s a legal prohibition from us doing so.”

Our offices still have not received any of these documents. We are therefore writing to demand immediate access to all records and communications related to the Disinformation Governance Board.

Under 5 U.S.C. § 2954, “An Executive agency, on request of ... the [Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee], or any five members thereof, shall submit any information requested of it relating to any matter within the jurisdiction of the committee.” Pursuant to this authority, and so that the Congress can consider remedial legislation, please immediately produce the following records:

1. All records related to the Department’s Disinformation Governance Board, including but not limited to:
  - a. written or recorded communications concerning the formation of the Board;
  - b. the agenda or minutes from any meeting at which the Board’s formation was discussed;
  - c. any legal review to determine whether the activities of the Board would be authorized by the Constitution of the United States;
  - d. any communications or records about the individuals who would be recruited to serve on the Board;
  - e. any communications concerning the appointment of an executive director for the Board; and
  - f. any communications with the White House about the formation of the Board

or appointment of officials to serve on the Board.

2. For any documents that are responsive to this request but withheld from the Committee, please identify the name of each document, the date of its creation, the custodian, a summary of its contents, and the basis for withholding the record from the Committee.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,