

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 11, 2026

Susie Wiles
White House Chief of Staff
Executive Office of the President
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Ms. Wiles:

We write seeking clarity regarding the funding, governance, and role of Freedom 250, a private entity planning and promoting events associated with the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. Recent reporting indicates that Freedom 250 is soliciting large private donations while offering donors exclusive access and other benefits tied to the President.¹ These reports raise serious questions about transparency, potential conflicts of interest, and whether access to the Administration's official or quasi-official activities is being conditioned on or provided in exchange for financial contributions.

According to public accounts, Freedom 250 appears to operate alongside, and in some cases overlap with, America250, the congressionally authorized commission established by the *United States Semiquincentennial Commission Act of 2016* to plan a nonpartisan, civic-focused commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding.² To the extent Freedom 250 is shaping major anniversary programming or coordinating with the White House and federal agencies, it is imperative that Congress and the public understand how decisions are made, who exercises control, and what guardrails exist to prevent inappropriate donor influence. Absent clear rules, this structure risks blurring the line between legitimate civic fundraising and pay-for-play access tied to official government functions, an all too familiar feature of the current Administration.

We are particularly concerned by the solicitation for sponsorship packages circulated to potential Freedom 250 donors promising supporters who give \$1 million or more preferential access to the President and high-profile events held at or in connection with official government venues.³ Linking private contributions – explicitly or implicitly – to invitations to White House events, photo ops, ceremonial roles, or other forms of access unavailable to the general public, raises serious concerns about the auctioning of government activities. Furthermore, these arrangements may implicate federal bribery, conflict of interest, or ethics statutes and will be subject to close scrutiny.

These concerns are heightened where events are sponsored, hosted, or facilitated by the White House or federal agencies, yet appear to serve President Trump's political agenda and allies

¹ Kenneth P. Vogel, Lisa Friedman, and David A. Fahrenthold, *For \$1 Million, Donors to U.S.A. Birthday Group Offered Access to Trump*, The New York Times (February 8, 2026), https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/08/us/politics/freedom-250-trump-donors.html?unlocked_article_code=1.K1A.zdlW.uBo3bU7o-xgN&smid=url-share.

² Public Law 114-196.

³ Freedom 250, "Sponsorship Packages," <https://static01.nyt.com/newsgraphics/documenttools/f6e549fa141d220f/01cfe3d5-full.pdf>.

while presenting opportunities for donor recognition that resemble political fundraising activity. Government-sponsored civic commemorations should not serve as platforms for political messaging or partisan activity, nor should they create opportunities for donors to exert influence with federal decision-makers under the guise of patriotic celebration. Moreover, the use of a private entity to raise funds for activities closely associated with the presidency risks circumventing transparency, disclosure, and guardrails that ordinarily apply to campaign fundraising or official government operations.

Taken together, these circumstances warrant careful scrutiny to ensure that preparations for the nation's semiquincentennial remain nonpartisan, transparent, and focused on the public interest. Furthermore, these concerns echo previously raised inquiries – which remain unanswered – regarding the financing of President Trump's White House ballroom construction project, which includes private donations from individuals and corporations whose business interests are directly impacted by the Administration and its decisions.⁴ It is also alarming that Meredith O'Rourke – identified as a lead fundraiser coordinating private donations for both the White House ballroom project and Freedom 250 – appears to be centrally involved in soliciting high-value contributions tied to access to the Office of the President and President Trump himself in both efforts.⁵

In order to carry out our oversight responsibilities and provide transparency to the American public, we request the following information by February 20, 2026:

1. Provide a complete list of all individual and corporate donors who have contributed to Freedom 250 to date, including the amount and date of each contribution.
 - a. Describe any benefits, access, recognition, or other consideration donors have received or been promised in connection with their contributions.
2. Describe Freedom 250's governance structure, including its leadership, board members, and any formal or informal role played by White House officials or federal agencies in its operations or decision-making.
3. Describe Meredith O'Rourke's specific role in facilitating fundraising efforts for both the White House ballroom project and Freedom 250.
4. Explain how Freedom 250 coordinates with America250, the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission, or other federally authorized entities, including whether funds, programming responsibilities, or branding are shared.
5. Describe any ethics guidance sought or received by the White House regarding Freedom 250's fundraising practices, donor access, or relationship to official government activities.

⁴ Letter from Senator Schiff and colleagues to Susie Wiles on White House ballroom donors (October 28, 2025), <https://www.schiff.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Letter-from-Sen-Schiff-Colleagues-to-WH-on-Ballroom-Donors.pdf>.

⁵ Elizabeth Schulze, Will Steakin, et. al., *What we know about the donors funding the White House ballroom*, ABC News (October 22, 2025), <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/donors-funding-white-house-ballroom/story?id=126778550>.

a. Provide any records of communication between the White House and/or Freedom 250 leadership and the Office of Government Ethics or White House designated agency officials.

We look forward to your response and to ensuring that preparations for the nation's 250th anniversary reflect transparency, integrity, and service to the public interest.

Sincerely,



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator