

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY, IOWA, CHAIRMAN

LINDSEY O. GRAHAM, SOUTH CAROLINA
JOHN CORNYN, TEXAS
MICHAEL S. LEE, UTAH
TED CRUZ, TEXAS
JOSH HAWLEY, MISSOURI
THOM TILLIS, NORTH CAROLINA
JOHN KENNEDY, LOUISIANA
MARSHA BLACKBURN, TENNESSEE
ERIC SCHMITT, MISSOURI
KATIE BOYD BRITT, ALABAMA
ASHLEY MOODY, FLORIDA

RICHARD J. DURBIN, ILLINOIS
SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, RHODE ISLAND
AMY KLOBUCHAR, MINNESOTA
CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, DELAWARE
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, CONNECTICUT
MAZIE K. HIRONO, HAWAII
CORY A. BOOKER, NEW JERSEY
ALEX PADILLA, CALIFORNIA
PETER WELCH, VERMONT
ADAM B. SCHIFF, CALIFORNIA

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

July 8, 2026

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Todd Blanche
Acting Attorney General
Department of Justice

Dear Acting Attorney General Blanche:

Messages involving personnel in Jack Smith's Special Counsel Office (SCO) raise serious concerns about the Biden administration's failure to properly secure classified materials.¹ The messages show that these failures caused a security "violation and incident" where a Justice Department sensitive compartmented information facility (SCIF) accessible to SCO personnel was left open overnight and potentially longer.

For example, the messages show that there were concerns that 1) an individual was given access to classified materials without confirming they had the requisite "need to know"; 2) there was at least one instance where the potential movement of classified materials accessed by SCO personnel housed in a Justice Department SCIF was unaccounted for; and 3) "a violation and incident" occurred when a SCIF accessible to SCO personnel was left open at least overnight and potentially longer. The messages appear related to Smith's case against President Trump for allegedly mishandling classified materials, and I write to seek additional information in that regard.

[REST OF PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK]

¹ These messages and individual names were produced by the Justice Department in response to a request for communications between and among Special Counsel Jack Smith personnel.

A. Concerns that individuals were provided access to classified materials without confirming they had the appropriate “need to know” and material housed in a SCIF may have been moved.

CVR - Carli Rodriguez-Feo; JAE - Julie Edelstein:

[Monday, July 24, 2023 3:16:18 PM] CVR: Thank you for not backing down on this need to know issues and access to classified material.. it's complex but I completely see and agree with your points. National security and classified is VERY diffident than usual. Patience for both of us bc this may still pan out..

[Monday, July 24, 2023 3:27:41 PM] CVR: Let me know if I missed anything at the end there

[Monday, July 24, 2023 3:27:51 PM] CVR: I was logging off as someone was asking Ray a question

[Monday, July 24, 2023 3:51:27 PM] JAE: I give up. I'm not even sure I had the right answer, I just thought it was worthy of discussion.

[Sunday, October 15, 2023 7:12:18 PM] CVR: Just picked up a classified letter for the other case... zero heads up from CISOs, just happened to be here...

[Sunday, October 15, 2023 7:35:04 PM] JAE: Ridiculous.

[Monday, October 16, 2023 7:05:46 PM] CVR: Let me know if you want me to call Jay and talk him through the material in the SCIF to get solid numbers

[Monday, October 16, 2023 7:07:22 PM] JAE: Thanks. I just tried calling Brett, but he didn't answer. Let's give him a couple minutes, but if we don't hear back, probably a good idea.

[Monday, October 16, 2023 7:07:31 PM] CVR: Also, love how Dan just moved forward with clearing someone without the need to know confirmation.. “were there any concerns” ... don't care if there were!

[Monday, October 16, 2023 7:08:12 PM] CVR: Just don't want Jay to leave but also not sure if Brett moved the material or not.. would be best to hear back from him first

[Monday, October 16, 2023 7:09:10 PM] JAE: Got him on phone now

[Monday, October 16, 2023 7:12:19 PM] JAE: Brett doesn't remember. Can you call Jay?

[Monday, October 16, 2023 7:12:25 PM] CVR: Yes

[Monday, October 16, 2023 7:13:28 PM] JAE: Thanks so much!

B. A SCIF accessible to SCO personnel was left open overnight and potentially longer which created “a violation and incident,” and there was limited help with oversight to secure the SCIF.

WGO - William O'Neil; CVR - Carli Rodriguez-Feo:²

[Thursday, April 18, 2024 6:19:52 PM] WGO: I tried to lock up the SCIF but apparently my pin isn't working. It got upset with me and now says door in alert.

[Thursday, April 18, 2024 6:20:21 PM] WGO: Do I just need to find someone who had pin access who can enter their pin?

[Thursday, April 18, 2024 6:31:34 PM] WGO: Disregard. Found TPW and he was able to assist in closing. I will reach out tomorrow to find out why my pin doesn't work.

[Friday, April 19, 2024 10:55:31 AM] CVR: Who opened the SCIF yesterday? That's usually the go to for closing if no one is around

[Friday, April 19, 2024 10:55:59 AM] CVR: Did you get your pin issue resolved?

[Friday, April 19, 2024 11:10:35 AM] WGO: I drafted the email this morning and got pulled away. I am going to send it shortly.

[Friday, April 19, 2024 11:11:30 AM] WGO: No one opened it yesterday because no one closed it the day before.

[Friday, April 19, 2024 11:12:07 AM] CVR: Who opened it the day before?

That's a violation and incident so I need to know the details.

[Friday, April 19, 2024 11:12:23 AM] WGO: SLV

[Friday, April 19, 2024 11:13:00 AM] CVR: Ok. I'll send an email.

[Friday, April 19, 2024 11:15:18 AM] CVR: Also, going forward, if I'm not there, will you please check the SCIF before you leave to ensure it's closed? Now that Raskin and Brett are gone, I'm very limited in help with oversight.

[Friday, April 19, 2024 11:16:57 AM] WGO: I was planning on doing that going forward. That's why I checked last night. I don't want people forgetting.

[Friday, April 19, 2024 11:17:21 AM] CVR: Ok thanks

[Friday, April 19, 2024 3:20:31 PM] WGO: So SEPS somehow **expletive** up peoples SCO access and they are working on resolving it. It only affected those who had credentials made for them recently.

[Friday, April 19, 2024 4:19:38 PM] CVR: Sheesh, it never ends

² TPW – Thomas Windom; SLV – Stephanie Van Buskirk

C. SLV - Stephanie Van Buskirk was identified in the messages above as opening the SCIF “the day before” that resulted in the “violation and incident”, and she appears to be an assistant to Jack Smith.

MGG - Molly Gaston; TPW - Thomas Windom

[Wednesday, August 2, 2023 10:41:08 PM] MGG: Is Jack assistant-less at moment?

[Wednesday, August 2, 2023 10:47:26 PM] J.P. Cooney: Kind of. But not totally.

[Wednesday, August 2, 2023 10:47:38 PM] J.P. Cooney: Stephanie is helping. And whole team pitching in.

[Wednesday, August 2, 2023 10:47:53 PM] MGG: Got it.

[Friday, January 26, 2024 8:56:14 AM] JP Cooney: SLV is back today. She is going to see you to see if she can help putting materials together for Jack at the end of the day. Please use her help if it helps you; whatever is easiest.

While serving as Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton mishandled highly classified material.³ Not only did the Obama Justice Department not prosecute, but—as shown by the records that have since been declassified—the Obama FBI also failed to fully investigate necessary leads.⁴ Regarding Joe Biden, the Biden administration’s Justice Department refused to prosecute his decades-long mishandling of highly classified information even though the Department determined evidence showed “that President Biden willfully retained and disclosed classified materials.”⁵ The text messages above show SCO personnel during the Biden administration discussing an individual who was given access to classified material without confirming their “need to know” and the failure to properly secure classified information held in a SCIF which caused a “violation and incident.” This conduct appears to show the Biden Justice Department may have mishandled classified information while it prosecuted President Trump for allegedly mishandling classified information. This is yet another example of law enforcement’s double standards in the previous administration.

Please provide answers to the following questions and responsive records no later than July 22, 2026.

1. Did the SCIF at issue in the messages contain material that was part of Jack Smith’s prosecution of then-candidate Trump?
2. Did the Biden Justice Department perform any investigation into Special Counsel Jack Smith’s operation for the following:
 - a. Personnel being given access to classified information without confirming their need to know? If yes, what were the results? If not, why not?

³ Press Release, *State Dept.’s Clinton Server Review Found 38 Individuals Culpable for 91 Security Violations*, (Oct. 18, 2019) <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/state-dept-s-clinton-server-review-found-38-individuals-culpable-91-security>.

⁴ Press Release, *Newly Declassified DOJ Watchdog Report Shows FBI Cut Corners in Clinton Email Investigation*, (Jul. 21, 2025) <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/newly-declassified-doj-watchdog-report-shows-fbi-cut-corners-in-clinton-email-investigation>.

⁵ Special Counsel Robert K. Hur, *Report on the Investigation Into Unauthorized Removal, Retention, and Disclosure of Classified Documents Discovered at Locations Including the Penn Eiden Center and the Delaware Private Residence of President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.*, (Feb. 5, 2024) <https://www.justice.gov/storage/report-from-special-counsel-robert-k-hur-february-2024.pdf>.

- b. Unauthorized access to, or mishandling of, classified materials? If yes, what were the results? If not, why not?
 - c. If any classified materials, including classified evidence, were compromised, missing, altered, or tampered with? If yes, what were the results? If not, why not?
 - d. Who was responsible for failing to properly secure the SCIF? Have they been held accountable? If yes, what were the results? If not, why not?
 - e. Who was provided with access to the SCIF without a need to know?
 - f. Who was responsible for the security “violation and incident” referenced in the April 19, 2024, text messages? Were they held accountable? If not, why not?
3. Did Special Counsel Smith notify President Trump’s counsel or the federal court about the security “violation and incident” referenced in the April 19, 2024, text messages and government personnel having access to material without confirming their need to know? If not, why not?
 4. Provide the names, positions, and duty assignment for all SCO, DOJ, or other government personnel who were granted access to SCO classified materials while secured at Justice Department facilities when Smith served as Special Counsel.
 5. Provide the names, positions, and duty assignment for SCO, DOJ, other government personnel, or any individual who accessed, whether authorized or unauthorized, SCO classified materials while secured at Justice Department facilities when Smith served as Special Counsel.

Thank you for your prompt review and responses. If you have any questions, please contact my Committee staff.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary