

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 23, 2026

The Honorable Susie Wiles
Chief of Staff
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Ms. Wiles:

We write to demand an immediate, government-wide investigation into the decision to restrict SpaceX's Starshield satellite-based intelligence and military support services in Ukraine. Congress and the American public deserve to know who authorized the restrictions, how they were implemented, and whether they were directed by the Trump Administration or Elon Musk. As Silicon Valley's elected members in Congress, we represent hundreds of innovation economy employers and workers whose livelihoods depend on the credibility of American technology abroad. Politically motivated service interruptions or erratic throttling will undermine reputations developed through decades of work that Americans have led to support our allies and customers throughout the world.

Recent reporting indicates restrictions on Starshield satellite communications services—which Ukrainian forces rely upon—have disrupted critical drone operations and air defenses against Russian attacks. We have read conflicting accounts about who ordered these restrictions.¹ Mr. Musk has denied responsibility, claiming that the Pentagon owns and operates Starshield. However, subsequent reporting indicates that Mr. Musk personally authorized the restrictions.² Despite the resulting loss of human life, and the serious national security implications, neither the Administration nor SpaceX has provided a clear and consistent explanation of responsibility.

Either a private contractor independently made life-and-death national security decisions, or President Trump directed the restriction of critical military communications supporting a U.S. ally. Either outcome raises profound concerns about the conduct of American foreign policy. The lack of transparency also threatens American technological leadership. When a U.S. company abruptly restricts essential services without explanation, global customers should conclude that American technology is, at best, unreliable and, at worst, subject to arbitrary government interference. At a time when the European Commission, India, and other allies have already established explicit goals to reduce their reliance on American technology in key domains, the restrictions on Starshield threaten not just SpaceX's reputation, but that of the entire American technology industry.³

These reports also raise broader concerns about the intersection of political influence, federal contracting, and the substantial taxpayer-funded business interests of Mr. Musk's companies. SpaceX and other Musk-affiliated businesses hold or compete for significant federal contracts, including through the Department of Defense, NASA, and the Department of Commerce's Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program. We will ensure that the 120th Congress will closely scrutinize federal funding awarded to Mr. Musk's businesses, including whether these companies meet their contractual obligations, and whether adequate

¹ <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/elon-musk-ukraine-spacex-starshield-trump-administration/>

² <https://www.defensenews.com/pentagon/2026/10/16/order-to-limit-starshield-for-ukraine-came-from-inside-white-house-sources-say/>

³ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/digital-swaraj-mission-gtri-flags-risks-of-us-tech-dependence-calls-for-indias-cloud-and-os-self-reliance-by-2030/articleshow/123880429.cms>

safeguards exist against political interference, arbitrary service restrictions, and misuse of federal resources. If SpaceX cannot provide reliable service for critical national security missions, Congress must carefully consider whether to entrust over \$700 million in taxpayer dollars to the company to provide broadband service to thousands of underserved Americans. Indeed, as Starlink actively lobbies for state exemptions from Congressionally mandated standards for BEAD-funded service quality and dependability, we cannot allow substandard technology providers to prevent American taxpayers from getting the service they deserve.⁴

We therefore call on the White House to coordinate an immediate, government-wide investigation, including the Department of Defense and all relevant federal agencies, to provide Congress with a full accounting, including an initial briefing within 14 days of:

1. Who made the decision to restrict Starshield speeds in Ukraine. Identify every federal official, SpaceX executive, or other individual who authorized, directed, approved, or was consulted about the restrictions, including any involvement by President Trump or Mr. Musk.
2. How the restrictions were implemented. Explain the instructions, communications, technical measures, and chain of command used to restrict services, including whether federal officials or SpaceX personnel executed the changes.
3. Whether contractual obligations were violated. Identify the contracts, service agreements, and legal authorities governing the affected services, whether the restrictions were consistent with those obligations, and whether the government approved or was notified of the changes.
4. Whether similar vulnerabilities exist elsewhere. Review federal contracts with SpaceX and other Musk-affiliated businesses to determine whether sufficient safeguards exist to prevent unilateral service disruptions, political interference, or failures to meet contractual commitments.

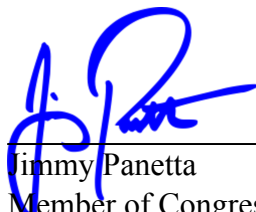
American taxpayers should never be left guessing whether the responsibility for critical national security decisions lies with their elected government or a private citizen with substantial financial interests in federal contracts. Nor should American innovators and their workforce be forced to bear the reputational and economic harm of politically motivated decisions made by others.

We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Sam T. Liccardo
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

⁴ <https://statescoop.com/spacex-starlink-bead-state-exemptions-ntia/>