

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 9, 2025

David Ellison
CEO
Paramount Skydance
1515 Broadway
New York, NY 10036

Dear Mr. Ellison:

We write once again seeking information on a side deal between Skydance and President Trump in connection with the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) approval of the Paramount-Skydance merger.

On July 21, 2025, we wrote to you asking about Skydance's reported "secret side deal" with President Trump, which appeared to be connected to Paramount's efforts to settle the President's lawsuit against CBS prior to securing approval for its mega-merger with Skydance.¹ In October 2024, President Trump, in his capacity as a private citizen, sued Paramount's subsidiary CBS over how it allegedly edited a "60 Minutes" interview with presidential candidate Vice President Kamala Harris.² President Trump filed the lawsuit after Paramount announced its \$8 billion merger with Skydance, a deal that required approval from President Trump's FCC before it could proceed.³ Even though CBS had initially claimed that the lawsuit was "without merit," its parent company Paramount, eventually settled with President Trump for \$16 million.⁴ Under the reported terms of the agreement, Paramount agreed to pay President Trump's legal fees, with the remainder of the settlement going toward his Presidential Library fund.⁵ Weeks after Paramount settled the lawsuit, President Trump's FCC approved Paramount's merger with Skydance.⁶

¹ Letter from Senator Elizabeth Warren, Senator Bernie Sanders, and Senator Ron Wyden to Skydance CEO David Ellison, July 21, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/warren_sanders_wyden_letter_to_skydance_on_paramount_settlement.pdf; New York Post, "How secret 'side deal' helped seal Paramount's \$16M settlement with Trump — and here's who deserves the credit," Charles Gasparino, July 2, 2025, <https://nypost.com/2025/07/02/media/how-secret-side-deal-helped-seal-paramounts-16m-settlement-with-trump/>.

² Trump v. CBS Broadcasting Inc., p. 1, <https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/69332852/1/trump-v-cbsbroadcasting-inc/>.

³ Federal Communications Commission, "Skydance Media and Paramount Global, MB Docket No. 24-275," <https://www.fcc.gov/transaction/skydance-paramount>.

⁴ CBS News, "A statement from 60 minutes," October 31, 2024, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/a-statement-from-60-minutes/>; The New York Times, "Paramount to Pay Trump \$16 Million to Settle '60 Minutes' Lawsuit," Benjamin Mullin, Michael M. Grynbaum, Lauren Hirsch, and David Enrich, July 2, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/02/business/media/paramount-trump-60-minutes-lawsuit.html>.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Federal Communications Commission, "FCC Approves Skydance's Acquisition of Paramount CBS," press release, July 24, 2025, <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-413229A1.pdf>.

Although it is clear that Paramount made a payment to President Trump, any payments or other potential quid-pro-quo arrangements made by Skydance continue to raise questions.

Press reports claim you reached a “side deal” with the President, the terms of which involve CBS airing public service announcements “and other broadcast transmissions” worth between \$15 million and \$20 million that “support conservative causes supported by President Trump.”⁷ President Trump himself has claimed that the side deal was worth more than Paramount’s \$16 million settlement, specifically, “about \$16 million plus 16 million, or maybe more than that in advertising... So it’s like \$32 [million] to maybe \$35 million.”⁸ But in a comment to the press, you did not provide clarity on whether any side deal exists — and if so, what its terms are.⁹

In the inquiry we sent to you, we warned that under the federal bribery statute, it is illegal to corruptly give anything of value to federal officials to influence an official act, and the existence of a side deal with the President to facilitate merger approval may violate anti-bribery laws.¹⁰

In your July 31 response, you refused to answer any questions about the existence of a side deal with President Trump, stating only that “Skydance executives and its representatives have had routine and customary interactions with government officials, including with the Administration, Congress, and federal regulators.”¹¹

Your refusal to answer questions, including your refusal to address reports of a side deal, leaves key unanswered questions about whether Skydance has made any agreements or has any “unwritten understanding[s]”¹² with President Trump, and if so, whether the existence of such a side deal may run afoul of federal bribery laws.

The public deserves to know which White House officials met with Skydance executives, and if Skydance cut a side deal with the President in order to grease the skids for its merger approval. These answers are all the more critical given President Trump’s recent comments. On September 23, Trump stated, “I can’t believe ABC Fake News gave Jimmy Kimmel his job back. ... Last time I went after [ABC], they gave me \$16 Million Dollars. This one sounds even more lucrative.”¹³ To address our concerns about companies making concessions to President Trump

⁷ Variety, “Trump Claims ‘60 Minutes’ Settlement Is Worth as Much as \$35 Million Including ‘Advertising’; Paramount Denies Deal Includes PSAs,” Todd Spangler, July 4, 2025, <https://variety.com/2025/tv/news/trump-60-minutes-lawsuit-settlement-advertising-35-million-paramount-psa-1236447353/>.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Hollywood Reporter, “David Ellison Meets the Press,” Erik Hayden, August 7, 2025, <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/business/business-news/david-ellison-paramount-skydance-1236339514/>.

¹⁰ 18 U.S.C. 201.

¹¹ Letter from Skydance to Senator Elizabeth Warren, Senator Bernie Sanders, and Senator Ron Wyden, July 31, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/skydance_response_to_senators_warren_sanders_wyden.pdf.

¹² The New York Times, “Why Did Shari Redstone Do It?,” James B. Stewart, August 19, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/19/business/media/shari-redstone-paramount-trump-settlement.html>.

¹³ Post on Truth Social by Donald J. Trump, September 23, 2025, <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/115256938634035559>.

in exchange for favorable action by his administration, and to gain clarity on your incomplete responses, and to inform our legislative activity regarding the *Presidential Library Anti-Corruption Act*, and other government ethics, corruption, and antitrust matters, we ask that you answer the following questions by October 23, 2025.

1. Is there currently any arrangement — either a formal written agreement or an “unwritten understanding” — under which you, Skydance, or any entity affiliated with Skydance or the new Paramount Skydance will provide compensation, advertising, or promotional activities that in any way assist President Trump, his family, his Presidential Library, or other administration officials?
 - a. If so, what is the nature of this arrangement? What will you or Skydance provide, and what have you discussed receiving in return from the Trump administration?
 - b. Have any Skydance board members been involved in any of these discussions, or have you been involved in these discussions only in your personal capacity?
2. Did you or other Skydance executives meet with the following individuals:
 - a. President Trump?
 - b. White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles?
 - c. FCC Chair Brendan Carr?
 - d. Anyone else in the Trump administration?
 - e. If yes, please provide a summary of the nature of these discussions and specify on what day they took place.

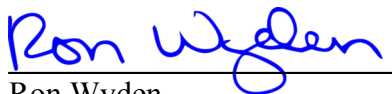
Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator