

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 2, 2026

The Honorable Pamela Bondi
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20530

Susie Wiles
White House Chief of Staff
Executive Office of the President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Attorney General Bondi and Ms. Wiles,

We write regarding reports of secretive meetings between you and Netflix CEO Ted Sarandos,¹ following which Netflix announced it would abandon its \$72 billion bid to acquire Warner Bros. Discovery (Warner Bros.).² Anonymous sources have claimed administration officials present at the meetings committed to conducting “a fair but thorough review of the transaction,”³ but we are concerned Trump administration officials in fact used the closed-door meetings to discourage Netflix’s bid so that Paramount Skydance (Paramount), the bidder reportedly favored by President Trump,⁴ could take over Warner Bros. instead.

Netflix and Paramount have been involved in a months-long, multi-billion-dollar bidding war to purchase media giant Warner Bros. Either merger would have enormous consequences for the American people, and for their ability to choose what they watch on TV and how much they are forced to pay for watching it. And the entire process has been clouded by corruption concerns.

According to reports, on February 26, 2026, Mr. Sarandos met with each of you and “Justice Department antitrust officials to try to convince the administration not to oppose [a Netflix purchase] on antitrust grounds.”⁵ At the time, the Department of Justice’s (DOJ) Antitrust

¹ New York Post, “Paramount Skydance victory in Warner Bros. Discovery bidding war came after failed Netflix exec visit to win over White House,” Charles Gasparino, February 26, 2026, <https://nypost.com/2026/02/26/media/paramount-skydance-victory-in-warner-bros-discovery-bidding-war-came-after-failed-netflix-exec-visit-to-win-over-white-house/>; CBS News, “Netflix drops \$83 billion bid for Warner Bros. Discovery, paving way for Paramount Skydance deal,” February 27, 2026, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/netflix-warner-paramount-skydance-deal/>.

² The Wall Street Journal, “Paramount Wins Bidding War for Warner Discovery After Netflix Drops Out,” Joe Flint, February 27, 2026, <https://www.wsj.com/business/media/warner-discovery-says-paramounts-latest-bid-is-superior-to-netflix-deal-e0ceea4c>.

³ The New York Times, “Netflix Backs Out of Bid for Warner Bros., Paving Way for an Ellison Takeover,” Lauren Hirsch, Michael M. Grynbaum, and Benjamin Mullin, February 26, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/26/business/warner-bros-discovery-paramount-deal-netflix.html>.

⁴ CNN, “With Trump’s apparent blessing, the Ellisons are amassing a media empire,” David Goldman, February 27, 2026, <https://www.cnn.com/2026/02/26/business/paramount-wbd-merger-david-ellison>.

⁵ New York Post, “Paramount Skydance victory in Warner Bros. Discovery bidding war came after failed Netflix exec visit to win over White House,” Charles Gasparino, February 26, 2026, <https://nypost.com/2026/02/26/media/paramount-skydance-victory-in-warner-bros-discovery-bidding-war-came-after-failed-netflix-exec-visit-to-win-over-white-house/>.

Division was actively reviewing the proposed deal, pursuant to its duty to ensure that pending mergers do not violate antitrust laws designed to protect competitive markets and Americans from robber baron-style behavior by monopolist companies.⁶ But just hours after your reported meetings with Mr. Sarandos, Netflix bowed out of the Warner Bros. bidding war, leaving Paramount as the apparent winner of the contest to purchase the company.⁷ Your conversations with Mr. Sarandos taint the Warner Bros. bidding process by raising suspicions that the Trump administration's DOJ is making merger review decisions based on politicized favoritism rather than the law or the facts.

Your reported meetings with Mr. Sarandos look even more disturbing because the meetings occurred just days after the politicized ouster of Antitrust Division Chief Gail Slater and amidst increasing lobbyist influence over DOJ's antitrust work.⁸ There have been ongoing reports indicating that DOJ leadership has been meeting with lobbyists and influence-peddlers for companies involved in merger discussions, and have subsequently overridden the Antitrust Division's significant antitrust concerns in order to rubber-stamp massive deals.⁹ Trump-friendly lobbyists like Mike Davis and firms like Ballard Partners that have connections within the Trump administration have been raking in cash from companies trying to get their mega-mergers through the DOJ.¹⁰ Netflix and Paramount have both hired Ballard Partners as their lobbyist.¹¹ Notably, prior to joining the Trump administration, you both previously worked at Ballard Partners¹² — as recently as January 2025 in the case of Attorney General Bondi.¹³

⁶ Deadline, "Netflix Officially Under DOJ Antitrust Scrutiny 'To Create A Monopoly' With Warner Bros Merger; Feds Want Details From Producers & Filmmakers On Streamer's Leverage," Dominic Patten, February 22, 2026, <https://deadline.com/2026/02/doj-netflix-wb-deal-antitrust-probe-1236731978/>.

⁷ New York Post, "Paramount Skydance victory in Warner Bros. Discovery bidding war came after failed Netflix exec visit to win over White House," Charles Gasparino, February 26, 2026, <https://nypost.com/2026/02/26/media/paramount-skydance-victory-in-warner-bros-discovery-bidding-war-came-after-failed-netflix-exec-visit-to-win-over-white-house/>.

⁸ Bloomberg, "'Good Riddance': How a MAGA Acolyte Helped Oust Antitrust Chief," Leah Nylen and Josh Sisco, February 13, 2026, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2026-02-13/how-trump-maga-acolyte-mike-davis-drove-out-antitrust-s-top-cop>.

⁹ The Wall Street Journal, "Bondi Aides Corrupted Antitrust Enforcement, Ousted DOJ Official Says," Dave Michaels, August 18, 2025, <https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/bondi-aides-corrupted-antitrust-enforcement-ousted-doj-official-says-466ed83>; The Wall Street Journal, "Real-Estate Brokerages Avoided Merger Investigation After Justice Department Rift," Dave Michaels and Nicole Friedman, January 9, 2026, <https://www.wsj.com/us-news/law/real-estate-brokerages-avoided-merger-investigation-after-justice-department-rift-e846c797>.

¹⁰ *Id.*; Letter from Senator Warren et al. to Inspectors General, February 18, 2026, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter_from_warren_lawmakers_to_16_inspectors_general_on_lobbyists_in_the_trump_administration.pdf; The American Prospect, "Trump Justice Department Poised to Preserve Ticketmaster Monopoly," David Dayen, February 12, 2026, <https://prospect.org/2026/02/12/trump-justice-department-ticketmaster-live-nation-monopoly/>.

¹¹ Politico, "Inside the Warner Bros. lobbying bonanza," Daniel Lippman and Caitlin Oprysko, December 8, 2025, <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/12/08/inside-the-warner-bros-lobbying-bonanza-00682276>.

¹² Politico, "Here's what happens when big-time lobbyists become big-name Trump officials," Caitlin Oprysko, September 21, 2025, <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/09/21/lobbying-connections-duffy-wiles-00574382>.

¹³ U.S. Office of Government Ethics, "Public Financial Disclosure Report (OGE Form 278e)," Pam Bondi, January 3, 2025, [https://extapps2.oge.gov/201/Presiden.nsf/PAS+Index/ABF60CD8EC97BBB585258C150032DCB2/\\$FILE/Bondi%2C%20Pam%20%20final278.pdf](https://extapps2.oge.gov/201/Presiden.nsf/PAS+Index/ABF60CD8EC97BBB585258C150032DCB2/$FILE/Bondi%2C%20Pam%20%20final278.pdf).

Because of these troubling connections, Senator Warren and Senator Blumenthal wrote to Attorney General Bondi in December 2025 asking that she recuse herself from all matters involving the Warner Bros. merger.¹⁴ Although federal law directs executive branch officials to recuse themselves from the party matters of former employers they worked for in the past year,¹⁵ and though Ballard may be involved in the Warner Bros. merger, you appear to be heavily involved in politicized discussions about the merger.¹⁶

Prior to last Thursday, Netflix and Paramount Skydance had been engaged in an aggressive bidding war to take over Warner Bros., amid ongoing concerns about bribery and corruption.¹⁷ Paramount Skydance, owned by Trump ally David Ellison, secured DOJ approval of its own mega-merger last summer after Paramount settled a legally dubious lawsuit by President Trump against CBS, and after Mr. Ellison reportedly made a secret “side deal” with President Trump.¹⁸

President Trump reportedly favored Paramount Skydance’s bid to take over Warner Bros. from the beginning.¹⁹ At the time the bidding process began, Mr. Ellison’s allies reportedly suggested that Paramount Skydance “is the only buyer who would pass muster with Trump administration regulators,” describing the advantage as “the Trump card,” and in late 2025 made “Trump’s

¹⁴ Letter from Senator Elizabeth Warren and Senator Richard Blumenthal to Attorney General Pam Bondi, December 17, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/warren_blumenthal_letter_to_ag_bondi_re_warner_brosrecusal.pdf.

¹⁵ 5 CFR 2635.502; Letter from Pam Bondi to Designated Agency Ethics Official Jolene Ann Lauria, January 14, 2025, [https://extapps2.oge.gov/201/Presiden.nsf/PAS+Index/FC3B6F6F496E257B85258C150032F344/\\$FILE/Bondi%2C%20Pam%20%20finalEA.pdf](https://extapps2.oge.gov/201/Presiden.nsf/PAS+Index/FC3B6F6F496E257B85258C150032F344/$FILE/Bondi%2C%20Pam%20%20finalEA.pdf); U.S. Office of Government Ethics, “Guide to Drafting Nominee Ethics Agreements,” October 2024, p. 39, [https://www.oge.gov/web/OGEnsf/0/3CE31096F4576AD585258BA800601103/\\$FILE/2024%20Guide%20to%20Drafting%20Nominee%20Ethics%20Agreements.docx](https://www.oge.gov/web/OGEnsf/0/3CE31096F4576AD585258BA800601103/$FILE/2024%20Guide%20to%20Drafting%20Nominee%20Ethics%20Agreements.docx) (noting that, “[f]or party matters involving former employers, the ethics agreement does not leave the question of recusal under 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502 to a PAS nominee’s case-by-case determination. Instead, the U.S. Office of Government Ethics has determined prospectively that any such party matter will cause a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts to question the PAS nominee’s participation in the matter.”).

¹⁶ MLex, “Netflix, WBD got second request from US DOJ on Jan. 16,” January 20, 2026, <https://www.mlex.com/mlex/articles/2431765/netflix-wbd-got-second-request-from-us-doj-on-jan-16>; Deadline, “Paramount Clears A U.S. Antitrust Hurdle In Bid For Warner Bros. Discovery; Netflix Notes Rival Is ‘A Long Way’ From Getting Regulatory Signoffs — Update,” Jill Goldsmith, February 20, 2026, <https://deadline.com/2026/02/paramount-clears-us-antitrust-hurdle-warner-bros-discovery-1236730560/>.

¹⁷ The Wall Street Journal, “Paramount Wins Bidding War for Warner Discovery After Netflix Drops Out,” Joe Flint, February 27, 2026, <https://www.wsj.com/business/media/warner-discovery-says-paramounts-latest-bid-is-superior-to-netflix-deal-e0ccea4c>; The New York Times, “Paramount to Pay Trump \$16 Million to Settle ‘60 Minutes’ Lawsuit,” Benjamin Mullin, Michael M. Grynbbaum, Lauren Hirsch, and David Enrich, July 2, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/02/business/media/paramount-trump-60-minutes-lawsuit.html>.

¹⁸ 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/>.

¹⁹ The Guardian, “CBS News and CNN staffers fear ‘disaster’ as Paramount wins Warner Bros battle,” Jeremy Barr, February 27, 2026, <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2026/feb/27/cbs-news-cnn-paramount-warner-bros-employees>; The Guardian, “Paramount Skydance wins Warner Bros Discovery bid after Netflix walks away from deal,” Jeremy Barr and Mark Sweney, February 27, 2026, <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2026/feb/26/netflix-paramount-warner-bros> (“Officials in the White House have long preferred the bid from Paramount, considering that the Ellison family has a friendly relationship with the president.”).

implicit support for the deal . . . their number one talking point” in negotiations.²⁰ Just last week, Mr. Ellison attended President Trump’s State of the Union address as a guest of Senator Lindsey Graham.²¹ Mr. Ellison is the son of Trump ally Larry Ellison, the billionaire owner of Oracle.²²

If Paramount Skydance’s deal with Warner Bros. goes through, one family will become a dominant force in American entertainment, with David Ellison owning Warner Bros., Paramount+, HBO, CBS News, CNN, TNT, TBS, Food Network, Discovery Channel, Animal Planet, HGTV, and more²³ — and with his father Larry Ellison partially owning TikTok’s U.S. business.²⁴ Paramount claims it will derive “\$6 billion in synergies from the deal,”²⁵ which could come largely from firing workers and cutting content. Federal antitrust law is designed to prevent mergers that would create massive conglomerates like this, which are bad for our economy and for Americans.²⁶

Netflix dropped out of the months-long bidding war for Warner Bros. last Thursday, hours after you reportedly met with Mr. Sarandos — leaving Paramount on what looks like a glide path to acquire Warner Bros. pending an upcoming shareholder vote.²⁷ The American people deserve to know what Mr. Sarandos was seeking in your meetings, what you said to him, and how your discussions may have contributed to Netflix backing out of the bidding war while the Antitrust Division’s investigation was still pending. To inform congressional oversight over the Trump administration’s compliance with federal antitrust and public corruption laws, we ask you to answer the following questions by March 16, 2026:

1. Did you meet with Mr. Sarandos on Thursday, February 26, 2026?
 - a. Where did this meeting take place?

²⁰ CNN Business, “David Ellison may have a ‘Trump card’ — literally — in Warner Bros. Discovery pursuit,” Brian Stelter, October 23, 2025, <https://www.cnn.com/2025/10/23/media/ellison-wbd-trump-warner-bros-discovery-bid>.

²¹ The New York Times, “Netflix Backs Out of Bid for Warner Bros., Paving Way for an Ellison Takeover,” Lauren Hirsch, Michael M. Grynbaum, and Benjamin Mullin, February 26, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/26/business/warner-bros-discovery-paramount-deal-netflix.html>; Deadline, “David Ellison To Attend Donald Trump’s State Of The Union Address,” Ted Johnson, February 24, 2026, <https://deadline.com/2026/02/david-ellison-trump-state-of-the-union-1236735207/>.

²² NPR, “Who is Larry Ellison, the billionaire Trump friend who's part of the TikTok takeover?,” Bobby Allyn, October 6, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/10/06/nx-s1-5560216/who-is-larry-ellison-the-billionaire-trump-friend-whos-part-of-the-tiktok-takeover>.

²³ Variety, “Paramount Skydance Poised to Acquire Warner Bros. Discovery After Netflix Bows Out of Bidding War,” Jennifer Maas and Cynthia Littleton, February 26, 2026, <https://variety.com/2026/tv/news/netflix-declines-raise-bid-warner-bros-discovery-1236674149/>.

²⁴ NPR, “Who is Larry Ellison, the billionaire Trump friend who's part of the TikTok takeover?,” Bobby Allyn, October 6, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/10/06/nx-s1-5560216/who-is-larry-ellison-the-billionaire-trump-friend-whos-part-of-the-tiktok-takeover>.

²⁵ The Wall Street Journal, “Paramount Wins Bidding War for Warner Discovery After Netflix Drops Out,” Joe Flint, February 27, 2026, <https://www.wsj.com/business/media/warner-discovery-says-paramounts-latest-bid-is-superior-to-netflix-deal-e0ccea4c>.

²⁶ Written Testimony of Diana Moss to the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Antitrust, Competition, and Consumer Rights, December 15, 2021, https://www.antitrustinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Moss_SJC-Hearing_Innovation_12.15.21.pdf.

²⁷ NBC News, “Netflix won’t increase its offer for Warner Bros., ceding bidding war to Paramount,” Allie Canal, Steve Kopack, and Daniel Arkin, February 26, 2026, <https://www.nbcnews.com/business/media/warner-bros-discovery-says-paramounts-offer-superior-netflix-deal-rcna260861>.

- b. What did you discuss during the meeting?
 - c. Who was present during the meeting?
 - d. Did you make any suggestions or threats regarding Trump administration actions against Netflix?
 - e. Did you make any suggestions or promises regarding Trump administration actions relating to the Warner Bros. merger?
2. Did you have any other meetings or communications with Mr. Sarandos or other Netflix representatives, lawyers, or lobbyists prior to February 26?
 - a. For each meeting or communication, please provide the date, the names of attendees, and a description of the discussion.
 - b. Did any of these meetings or communications involve individuals affiliated with Ballard Partners? Please describe.
3. Did you have any meetings or communications with David Ellison or other Paramount representatives, lawyers, or lobbyists prior to February 26?
 - a. For each meeting or communication, please provide the date, the names of attendees, and a description of the discussion.
 - b. Did any of these meetings or conversations involve individuals affiliated with Ballard Partners? Please describe.
4. Have you discussed Netflix's or Paramount's proposed acquisition of Warner Bros. with President Trump? Please describe the content of any such discussions.
5. Have you discussed, or directed others to discuss, Netflix's or Paramount's proposed acquisition of Warner Bros. with any current or former Antitrust Division officials, including former Assistant Attorney General Gail Slater? Please describe the content of any such discussions.
6. Have you directed the Antitrust Division to preserve or destroy records related to their review of Netflix's proposed acquisition of Warner Bros.?

We appreciate your attention to this matter.

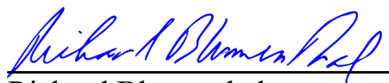
Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Sam T. Liccardo
Member of Congress



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator