Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 4, 2026

Honorable Platte B. Moring, III
Inspector General
U.S. Department of Defense – Office
of Inspector General
4800 Mark Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22350-1500

Dear Inspector General Moring:

We write regarding recent reporting that $3.2 billion in U.S. Government contracts, investments, and loans (collectively referred to as awards), largely from the Department of Defense (DoD or "the Department"), have been awarded to over a dozen companies with ties to President Trump's sons.[1] We are concerned about a growing cloud of corruption amid questions about whether the President's family and administration officials may be abusing their positions to influence DoD awards, and the extent to which this is undermining the competitive, apolitical contracting process used to ensure that service members have the best equipment and most effective technologies and weapons systems on the market.

The most recent reporting indicates that Donald Trump Jr. and Eric Trump are affiliated with two investment companies, 1789 Capital and American Ventures, which have poured money into at least 15 companies in the defense sector, ranging from start-ups to defense tech giants like Anduril and SpaceX.[2] After the Trump-affiliated firms became involved, these companies received $3.2 billion in awards and an additional $3.1 billion in future contract options.[3] The potential for corruption is obvious: as one expert noted, "[i]t would be completely reasonable for a decision-maker in the federal government under Trump 2.0 to believe that taking action against the Trump family financial interest is a dangerous thing."[4]

We have repeatedly sought, and failed to obtain, an explanation from the DoD and White House of the decision-making criteria, processes, and ethics obligations associated with recent awards to companies with ties to the Trump family.[5] For example, when Senators Warren, Kim, and

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[1] Washington Post, "Trump's sons invest heavily in defense tech as father's administration pours money in," Elizabeth Dwoskin, Andrew Ba Tran, Luis Melgar, et al., July 13, 2026, https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/interactive/2026/07/13/trumps-sons-invest-heavily-defense-fathers-administration-pours-money/.

[2] *Id.*

[3] *Id.*

[4] *Id.*

[5] Letter from U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren, Richard Blumenthal, and Andy Kim to Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, January 22, 2026, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/warren_letter_to_dod_on_trump_jrpentagoncontracts.pdf; Letter from U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren and Richard Blumenthal to Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, March 24, 2026, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/follow-up_letter_from_senators_warren_blumenthal_to_secretary_hegseth_on_trump_jrconflictsofinterest.pdf; Letter from

Blumenthal raised concerns about conflicts of interest related to contracts and loans from the Office of Strategic Capital (OSC) to companies backed by 1789 Capital – a firm that counts Trump Jr. among its partners – the sole reassurance they received is the platitude that OSC is "committed to upholding the highest ethical standards and ensuring that its investment decisions are free from conflicts of interest," with little explanation for *how* the Department is making decisions or operationalizing these ethics commitments.[6] This unsatisfactory response left us with more concerns that OSC is unaware of or willfully ignoring the potential for corruption in the awards process at the expense of U.S. national security.

In light of the growing reports of Trump-affiliated entities gaining huge DoD contracts and the refusal of the administration to address our concerns about self-enrichment and influence peddling in the Pentagon awards process, we ask the DoD Office of the Inspector General (IG) to conduct an evaluation of this matter. Specifically, we ask that the IG:

1. Determine which Pentagon awards since January 2025 have involved companies affiliated with the Trump family, and
2. Review the decision making process involved with these awards and determine if any DoD officials or outside entities failed to adhere to DoD statutes, rules, regulations, policies, or procedures applicable to these awards, including whether DoD officials communicated any non-public information with outside investors or groups prior to public announcements.

Your determination of whether any Trump-affiliated company may have obtained financial benefits from DoD contracts or awards is particularly important in light of President Trump's admission that his children "have inside information" in "almost anything they do" with regard to their investment portfolios.[7]

In requesting a review, we ask that the IG also examine whether the DoD's framework for making awards is sufficient to prevent conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest, and whether this framework should be strengthened to avoid conflicts of interest and self-dealing. Several proposals were included in the fiscal year 2027 (FY27) National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to strengthen recusal and ethics requirements related to Pentagon awards, including an amendment that requires a new code of conduct for employees of OSC and other investment arms of the Pentagon.[8] The Senate Armed Services Committee also considered a prohibition on OSC making equity investments in companies where the President, Vice President, Cabinet members, other executive officers with a role in investment decisions, and their families hold a stake.[9] We would like the IG to evaluate the strength of these FY27 NDAA

U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren, Richard Blumenthal, Mazie Hirono, et al. to White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles, June 2, 2026, https://www.warren.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/media/doc/warren_lawmakers_letter_to_white_house_re_white_house_intervention_in_trump_jrpentagoncontracts.pdf.

[6] Response from Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs Dane Hughes to a letter from U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren, Richard Blumenthal, and Andy Kim, March 10, 2026, [On file with the Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren].

[7] Snopes, "Did Trump say his children benefit from 'inside information' when they invest in stocks, crypto?," Joey Esposito, July 10, 2026, https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/trump-children-insider-info-quote/.

[8] S. 4784, Sec. 903, 119th Congress.

proposals and whether, had they been in place, they would have prohibited any of the DoD equity investments made since 2025.

We request that the DoD IG investigate award decisions made since 2025 comprehensively; however, award decisions and acquisition process issues of particular concern include:

1. In August 2025, DoD issued its largest-ever conditional loan commitment of $620 million to rare earth start-up Vulcan Elements.[10] 1789 Capital, a venture capital firm that counts Donald Trump Jr. among its partners, invested in Vulcan Elements in August 2025.[11] Public reporting indicates that Peter Navarro – a White House senior official and personal friend of Trump Jr. – intervened in pushing through the loan.[12] In doing so, Navarro may have violated federal ethics regulations, including Subpart E of the Executive Branch Standards of Ethical Conduct, which instructs executive branch employees to recuse themselves from matters that could create the appearance of impartiality, including matters involving persons with whom they seek a "business, contractual, or other financial relationship."[13] Vulcan has also received $10 million in Pentagon contracts.[14]
2. In July 2025, the Pentagon unexpectedly tacked xAI onto a list of AI investments and offered the company a $2 million contract that is permitted to balloon up to $200 million, despite concerns from the National Security Agency.[15] At the time, Under Secretary Emil Michael, who was responsible for overseeing DoD's artificial intelligence portfolio, stood to profit from the investment. He maintained a financial stake in xAI valued between $500,000 and $1 million and likely financially benefited from the transaction.[16] Michael later – and belatedly – sold his stock to comply with a mandatory divestiture order from the Office of Government Ethics, making $24 million in profit or up to a 4,800 percent return.[17]

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[9] Senate Committee on Armed Services, Report 119-127 on National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2027, S. 4784, June 15, 2026, https://www.congress.gov/committee-report/119th-congress/senate-report/127/1.

[10] Financial Times, "Donald Trump Jr-backed start-up scores $600mn US federal government deal," Alex Rogers and Joe Miller, December 2, 2025, https://www.ft.com/content/952f37ba-78b4-42a4-8d1b-2258de65f2c0?accessToken=zwAGRSMj8F2YkdOVLze6eLRCpNONGyJY3mXywA.MEQCIGDFazRBTOYa5ztzpUJ1XwZ2wQbKAtqlpuHmg2xpF4uRAiAiyNs3PSpPKxikJ9OjH8vteYQuKapHKftA_-7Xpnb7yQ&sharetype=gift&token=c972ce7e-89c9-4cfb-b282-e845b5d2d3ab&syn-25a6b1a6=1.

[11] ProPublica, "The White House Intervened to Get a $620 Million Deal for a Company Tied to Donald Trump Jr.," Robert Faturechi, May 28, 2026, https://www.propublica.org/article/donald-trump-jr-vulcan-deal-white-house.

[12] *Id.*

[13] 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502(a)(2); 502(b)(1)(i).

[14] DefenseNews, "Vulcan Elements wins Pentagon deals as $65M round fuels expansion," Jen Judson, August 25, 2025, https://www.defensenews.com/industry/2025/08/25/vulcan-elements-wins-pentagon-deals-as-65m-round-fuels-expansion/.

[15] NBC News, "Musk's xAI was a late addition to the Pentagon's set of $200 million AI contracts, former defense employee says," David Ingram and Ben Goggin, July 22, 2025, https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/security/musk-xai-was-added-late-pentagon-grok-defense-department-rcna219488; Wall Street Journal, "Government Agencies Raise Alarm About Use of Elon Musk's Grok Chatbot," Shalini Ramachandran, Heather Somerville and Amrith Ramkumar, February 27, 2026, https://www.wsj.com/politics/nationalsecurity/elon-musk-xai-grok-security-safety-government-73ab4f6e.

[16] U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the General Counsel, "Supplement to Financial Disclosure Report of Emil G. Michael," March 27, 2025 [on file with the Office of Senator Elizabeth Warren].

3. In February 2025, DoD invested $90.8 million in a contract with hypersonics technology accelerator Stratolaunch for flight testing and technology development.[18] The company is owned by Cerberus Capital Management, the private equity company founded by Deputy Secretary of Defense Stephen Feinberg.[19] Though Deputy Secretary of Defense Stephen Feinberg has personally divested from his stake in the company, he reserved the right to transfer his stake to trusts that benefit his adult children.[20] In doing so, Deputy Secretary Feinberg's family may financially benefit from Pentagon deals with Cerberus, including the Stratolaunch contract.
4. The Pentagon has also awarded contracts of undisclosed value to three Cerberus-owned companies for the development of the Golden Dome missile defense program: North Wind, Stratolaunch, and Red River Technology.[21] Golden Dome is an exceedingly lucrative contracting opportunity, with an estimated cost of $185 billion,[22] and the program manager, U.S. Space Force General Michael Guetlein, reports directly to Deputy Secretary Feinberg.[23]
5. Reporting also suggests that 1789 Capital has invested in major defense contractors, Anduril and SpaceX.[24] Under the Trump administration and since the Trump Jr.-linked firm invested, the companies have brought in $1 billion and $2.1 billion, respectively, in government contracts.[25]
6. The U.S. Army has approached Cerberus to partner on strategic projects for an $150 billion infrastructure overhaul and make up for a $135 billion budget shortfall for necessary investments.[26]

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[17] The Guardian, "US defense official overseeing AI reaped millions selling xAI stock after Pentagon entered agreement with company," Aram Roston, April 9, 2026, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/apr/09/pentagon-ai-xai-emil-michael.

[18] Stratolaunch, "Stratolaunch Announces $90.8M Contract Award under MACH-TB 2.0 Task 3 for Air-Launched Capability Test Vehicles," press release, February 19, 2026, https://www.stratolaunch.com/news/stratolaunch-announces-90-8m-contract-award-under-mach-tb-2-0-task-3-for-air-launched-capability-test-vehicles/.

[19] The Guardian, "The billionaire hidden behind the curtain inside Trump's Pentagon," Aram Roston, June 18, 2026, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/jun/18/stephen-feinberg-trump-pentagon.

[20] Letter from U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren to Deputy Secretary of Defense Nominee Stephen Feinberg, March 9, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/media/doc/letter_from_senator_warren_to_feinberg_on_unresolved_ligado_conflict_of_interest.pdf.

[21] Letter from U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren to Deputy Secretary of Defense Stephen Feinberg, July 27, 2026, https://www.warren.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Follow-Up-Letter-from-Senator-Warren-to-Stephen-Feinberg-on-Golden-Dome.pdf.

[22] The Hill, "Golden Dome cost estimate grows to $185B," Ashley Fields, March 18, 2026, https://thehill.com/policy/defense/5789969-golden-dome-missile-defense-cost/.

[23] U.S. Department of Defense, "General Guetlein to lead the Office of Golden Dome for America," press release, July 22, 2025, https://www.war.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/4251596/general-guetlein-to-lead-the-office-of-golden-dome-for-america/; U.S. Space Force, "General Michael A. Guetlein," https://www.spaceforce.mil/Biographies/Display/Article/3632851/michael-a-guetlein/.

[24] Washington Post, "Trump's sons invest heavily in defense tech as father's administration pours money in," Elizabeth Dwoskin, Andrew Ba Tran, Luis Melgar, et al., July 13, 2026, https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/interactive/2026/07/13/trumps-sons-invest-heavily-defense-fathers-administration-pours-money/.

[25] *Id.*

[26] Just Security, "Will Trump Allow Private Equity to Gut the Army Too?," Margaret Mullins and Ben Dinovelli, January 7, 2026, https://www.justsecurity.org/126217/trump-private-equity-gut-army/.

7. In March 2026, the U.S. Army invested an initial $39.2 million in AI-enabled component factories via Hadrian, with a total contract value of $80 million.[27] The U.S. Navy simultaneously awarded Hadrian a $900 million contract for automated factories to scale submarine production.[28] Hadrian is backed by 1789 Capital.[29]
8. Cerebras Systems, another company backed by 1789 Capital, was awarded a chip contract for $45 million from the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) in April 2025.[30]
9. Foundation Future Industries is a humanoid robotics start-up that received $24 million in research contracts with the U.S. Army, Navy, and Air Force in April 2026.[31] The company is backed by American Ventures, an investment company that counts both Trump Jr. and Eric Trump as investors.[32]
10. Unusual Machines, a drone company that "counts Donald Trump Jr. as a shareholder and advisory board member,"[33] received a September 2025 contract for $12.8 million for drone components. The company is also reportedly in talks with the Trump administration about DoD loans and equity investments.[34] Reports of the potential DoD investments prompted a 50% stock value increase.[35]
11. PsiQuantum – a quantum chips start-up with a history of working with the Air Force Research Laboratory dating to October 2022[36] – received a $10.8 million Pentagon contract in April 2025, and five months later, in September 2025, 1789 Capital invested

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[27] U.S. Army, "Army accelerates advanced manufacturing with contracting award at Red River," press release, March 18, 2026, https://www.army.mil/article/291165/army_accelerates_advanced_manufacturing_with_contracting_award_at_red_river.

[28] Defense One, "Navy bets $900M on automated factories to boost submarine production," Lauren Williams, March 20, 2026, https://www.defenseone.com/defense-systems/2026/03/navy-bets-900m-automated-factories-boost-submarine-production/412290/.

[29] Washington Post, "Trump's sons invest heavily in defense tech as father's administration pours money in," Elizabeth Dwoskin, Andrew Ba Tran, Luis Melgar, et al., July 13, 2026, https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/interactive/2026/07/13/trumps-sons-invest-heavily-defense-fathers-administration-pours-money/.

[30] Cerebras, "Cerebras Systems, Ranovus win $45 million US military deal to speed up chip connections," press release, April 1, 2025, https://www.cerebras.ai/news/cerebras-systems-ranovus-win-usd45-million-us-military-deal-to-speed-up-chip-connections.

[31] Washington Post, "Trump's sons invest heavily in defense tech as father's administration pours money in," Elizabeth Dwoskin, Andrew Ba Tran, Luis Melgar, et al., July 13, 2026, https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/interactive/2026/07/13/trumps-sons-invest-heavily-defense-fathers-administration-pours-money/.

[32] Financial Advisor, "Trump Sons Invested In Private Fund Making Millions On Microcaps," Annie Massa and Olga Kharif, June 25, 2026, https://www.fa-mag.com/news/trump-sons-invested-in-private-fund-making-millions-on-microcaps-87541.html.

[33] The Wall Street Journal, "The Trump Administration Is in Talks to Fund U.S. Drone Companies," Heather Somerville and Amrith Ramkumar, May 27, 2026, https://www.wsj.com/politics/national-security/trump-us-drone-company-funding-cadef1f7?st=ic4Bru.

[34] *Id.*

[35] Investor's Business Daily, "Drone Stocks Jump As Trump Administration Pursues Funding Deals," Harrison Miller, May 28, 2026, https://www.investors.com/news/drone-stocks-funding-trump-administration-equity-stakes-umac-neros-pentagon-dod/.

[36] HPCwire, "PsiQuantum Secures $22.5M Contract with Air Force Research Labs," October 19, 2022, https://www.hpcwire.com/off-the-wire/psiquantum-secures-22-5m-contract-with-air-force-research-labs/.

in the company.[37] Since then, PsiQuantum has received its largest-ever government contract: $125 million from DARPA in July 2026.[38]

12. In August 2025, Firehawk Aerospace, another 1789 Capital company, received an Air Force contract for $4.9 million for the development of rocket engines.[39]
13. Aeon Industrial, a 1789 Capital-backed missile and autonomous targeting start-up, was awarded a $250,800 contract through the Army Applications Laboratory in April 2025.[40]
14. Deputy Secretary Feinberg has hired former Cerberus defense head George Kollitides to serve as a senior executive adviser and run the new Economic Defense Unit (EDU).[41] Kollitides was hired as a special government employee, able to both work for the federal government and continue his private sector employment.[42] His involvement in $200 billion of DoD investment decisions through the EDU presents conflicts of interest as long as Kollitides maintains roles in private investment advisory firms.[43]

Pentagon acquisitions, contracts, and loans are long-term investments costing taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars each year – all with the goal of ensuring that service members have what they need to keep Americans safe. Our service members in harm's way and the taxpayers footing the bill deserve to know that those dollars are being spent through a competitive process, not funneled into the bank accounts of administration cronies. Your office's investigation is crucial to exposing any conflicts of interest that have infected contracts at DoD and restoring confidence in the awards system.

Refusal to investigate these serious allegations will raise significant concerns about whether your office is able to perform its statutory duty as an independent watchdog over DoD. In recent months, our offices have called upon your office to investigate numerous incidents of waste, fraud, and abuse, including: conflicts of interest in immigration policy and contracting

[37] PsiQuantum, "PsiQuantum Announces $10.8M Contract with Air Force Research Laboratory to Deliver Novel Quantum Chip Capabilities to the U.S. Air Force," press release, April 15, 2025, https://www.psiquantum.com/news-import/psiquantum-afrl-omega; PsiQuantum, "PsiQuantum Raises $1 Billion to Build Million-Qubit Scale, Fault-Tolerant Quantum Computers," press release, September 10, 2025, https://www.psiquantum.com/news-import/psiquantum-1b-fundraise.

[38] PsiQuantum, "PsiQuantum Signs $125 Million Agreement with DARPA," press release, July 22, 2026, https://www.psiquantum.com/news-import/psiquantum-signs-125-million-agreement-with-darpa.

[39] Firehawk Aerospace, "Firehawk Aerospace Awarded 4.9M U.S. Air Force Contract to Advance Hybrid Rocket Engine Development," press release, August 25, 2025, https://firehawkdefense.com/news/firehawk-aerospace-awarded-49m-us-air-force-contract-advance-hybrid-rocket-engine-development/.

[40] Washington Post, "Trump's sons invest heavily in defense tech as father's administration pours money in," Elizabeth Dwoskin, Andrew Ba Tran, Luis Melgar, et al., July 13, 2026, https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/interactive/2026/07/13/trumps-sons-invest-heavily-defense-fathers-administration-pours-money/; Aeon, "Army Applications Laboratory Selects Aeon for Weapon System Contract," press release, April 22, 2025, https://www.aeonindustrial.com/news/aeon-army-applications-laboratory-tactical-weapons-contract.

[41] The Guardian, "The billionaire hidden behind the curtain inside Trump's Pentagon," Aram Roston, June 18, 2026, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/jun/18/stephen-feinberg-trump-pentagon.

[42] *Id.*

[43] *Id.*

decisions,[44] conflicts of interest for senior DoD officials who previously engaged in shadow lobbying,[45] violations of agency policy related to Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) layoffs,[46] and DoD's role in facilitating the acquisition of a Qatari jet for the President, potentially in violation of federal law and the Constitution.[47] In each of these instances, the IG has declined to investigate to the detriment of the taxpayers.[48] For example, in declining to investigate DoD's role in facilitating the acquisition of a Qatari jet, your office has enabled the Trump administration to waste approximately $400 million of U.S. Air Force money to produce a new Air Force One that reportedly lacks key features necessary to transport the President safely.[49]

We hope that your office will take seriously these latest concerns about corruption in the DoD award process and fulfill your statutory responsibility by initiating a review.

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[44] Letter from U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, U.S. Representative Jamie Raskin, U.S. Senator Andy Kim, et al. to Department of Homeland Security Inspector General Joseph Cuffari and DoD Acting Inspector General Steven Stebbins, December 8, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/media/doc/immigration_contractor_corruption_letter.pdf.

[45] Letter from U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren and Andy Kim, Representative Patrick Ryan, et al. to federal Inspectors General, February 18, 2026, https://www.warren.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/media/doc/letter_from_warren_lawmakers_to_16_inspectors_general_on_lobbyists_in_the_trump_administration.pdf.

[46] Letter from U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren, Gary Peters, Ron Wyden, et al. to federal Inspectors General, March 21, 2025, https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/IG-Mass-Layoff-Request.pdf.

[47] Letter from U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren, Adam Schiff, Richard Blumenthal, et al. to Acting Inspector General Steven Stebbins, May 13, 2025, https://www.schiff.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/2025.05.13-Senator-Schiff-Letter-to-DOD-IG.pdf.

[48] Response from Department of Defense Inspector General Platte Moring, III, to a letter from U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, U.S. Representative Jamie Raskin, U.S. Senator Andy Kim, et al., March 5, 2026, [On file with the Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren]; Response from Department of Defense Inspector General Platte Moring, III, to a letter from U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren and Andy Kim, Representative Patrick Ryan, et al., April 7, 2026, [On file with the Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren]; Response from Department of Defense Inspector General Platte Moring, III, to a letter from U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren, Gary Peters, Ron Wyden, et al., March 26, 2026, [On file with the Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren]; Response from Department of Defense Inspector General Platte Moring, III, to a letter from U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren, Adam Schiff, Richard Blumenthal, et al., March 26, 2026, [On file with the Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren].

[49] New York Times, "Security Precaution Led Trump to Use Old Air Force One in Leaving Turkey," Tyler Page, Julian Barnes, Eric Schmitt, et al., July 8, 2026, https://www.nytimes.com/2026/07/08/us/politics/trump-air-force-one-security.html.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

Robert Garcia
Ranking Member, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator