

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

September 17, 2024

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland:

The House Committee on Education and the Workforce and the House Committee on Natural Resources (Committees) are conducting ongoing oversight into alleged misconduct involving the Haskell Indian Nations University (HINU) and the U.S. Department of the Interior's (DOI) Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). On July 2, 2024, the Committees jointly sent a letter (Joint Letter) to Director Tony Dearman seeking documents and information related to the BIE report titled *Haskell Indian Nations University – Administrative Investigation Report: Allegation of Harassment, Bullying, Nepotism, Theft, Sexual Assault, Workplace Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying, Fraud, Waste and Abuse, and Drinking on Campus at Haskell Indian Nations University, located in Lawrence, Kansas (AIB Report)*, which was submitted to the BIE Human Resources Officer on November 7, 2022, but is dated January 13, 2023.¹

In response to our Joint Letter, DOI invited Majority and Minority staff from both Committees to review—in camera—less-redacted copies of the *AIB Report* as submitted on November 7, 2022, as finalized on January 13, 2023, and exhibits thereto. Staff from the Committees reviewed the materials DOI provided on August 1 and August 13, 2024. The Committees' *in camera* review made clear that the information contained in the documents is material to the investigation. For example, Committee staff observed significant differences between the draft and finalized *AIB Report*, including potential deletion of critical details and improper redactions.² The review made equally clear that the information contained in the documents made available could not be fully processed within the time, logistical, and technological limitations inherent in an *in camera* review.

¹ Bureau of Indian Education, *Haskell Indian Nations University – Administrative Investigation Report: Allegations of Harassment, Bullying, Nepotism, Theft, Sexual Assault, Workplace, Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying, Fraud, Waste and Abuse, and Drinking on Campus at Haskell Indian Nations University, located in Lawrence, Kansas* (Jan. 13, 2023).

² The Committees do not dispute the legitimacy of redacting students' personally identifiable information but noted that some language unredacted for the Committee's review that originally claimed to contain personally identifiable information did not.

Accordingly, to ensure proper oversight over DOI and HINU, the Committees hereby request the following records, documents, communications, or information, in electronic format, as soon as possible, but no later than October 1, 2024 (instructions attached):

1. A copy of the draft *AIB Report* dated November 7, 2022, as reviewed by Committee staff on August 1 and August 13, 2024, containing only those redactions necessary to conceal students' personally identifiable information.
2. A copy of the finalized *AIB Report* dated January 13, 2023, as reviewed by Committee staff on August 1 and August 13, 2024, containing only those redactions necessary to conceal students' personally identifiable information.
3. A copy of each and every exhibit to the *AIB Report*, clearly labeled and marked to be easily identifiable, containing only those redactions necessary to conceal students' personally identifiable information.
4. A written explanation and identification of any and all edits, amendments, deletions, additions, or other modifications made to the *AIB Report* and all exhibits thereto between November 7, 2022, and January 12, 2023.

Under Rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Education and the Workforce has jurisdiction over "education or labor generally" and "shall review, study, and coordinate on a continuing basis laws, programs, and Government activities relating to domestic educational programs and institutions and programs of student assistance within the jurisdiction of other committees."³ The Committee on Natural Resources has "general oversight" of any matter relating to its jurisdiction, including all matters concerning the DOI and relations between the United States and Tribal organizations.⁴

Please contact either Gabriella Pistone with the Committee on Education and the Workforce at (202) 225-4527 or Gabriella.Pistone@mail.house.gov or Michelle Lane with the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee of the Committee on Natural Resources at (202) 225-2761 or michelle.lane@mail.house.gov with any questions.

Sincerely,



Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman
House Committee on Education and the
Workforce



Bruce Westerman
Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources

³ R. of the H.R., 118th Cong. at 6-11 (Dec. 11, 2023).

⁴ *Id.*



Burgess Owens
Chairman
Subcommittee on Higher Education and
Workforce Development
House Committee on Education and the
Workforce



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
House Committee on Natural Resources

Enclosure