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April 23, 2012

Via Electronic Transmission

Kathryn H. Ruemmler
Assistant to the President and White House Counsel
Executive Office of the President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Ms. Ruemmler:

I read the comments today by White House press secretary Jay Carney regarding the ongoing investigation into the recent events surrounding the recall of 11 Secret Service agents from Colombia. On Friday evening I questioned Director Sullivan of the Secret Service and Acting Inspector General Edwards at the Department of Homeland Security about whether any members of the White House Communications Agency and/or White House Office of Advance (“White House advance staff”) had overnight guests while in Colombia.¹ At this time I am awaiting Director Sullivan’s full response to all my questions.

Today, it was announced by Mr. Carney that over the weekend the White House Counsel’s Office reviewed the matter and concluded that there was “no indication of any misconduct” by White House advance staff.² This came after Mr. Carney was questioned on Friday about the potential need for an internal review of the White House advance staff. Mr. Carney answered the question by assuring the White House press that, “I have no reason, as I said yesterday, to believe that there is a need for that.”³ Further, this afternoon, Mr. Carney refused to provide details of the review conducted by the White House Counsel’s Office.⁴

At the beginning of his administration President Obama released a memorandum entitled “Transparency and Open Government” and stated, “My administration is committed to creating

¹ Letter from Senator Grassley to Secret Service Director Sullivan. April 20, 2012.

² Steven T. Dennis. “WH Finds No Staff Involved in Secret Service Scandal.” *Roll Call*. April 23, 2012.

³ Press Briefing by Press Secretary Jay Carney and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. April 20, 2012.
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/04/20/press-briefing-press-secretary-jay-carney-and-secretary-education-arne-d>

⁴ Steven T. Dennis. “WH Finds No Staff Involved in Secret Service Scandal.” *Roll Call*. April 23, 2012.

an unprecedented level of openness in Government.”⁵ However, declining to provide details of the internal review conducted over the weekend, contradicts that goal set by President Obama. Therefore, to set the record straight about what actions were taken by the White House Counsel’s Office, please provide answers to the following questions:

- 1) Provide a detailed overview on what led the White House Counsel’s Office to conduct the weekend review? Was there any thought given to having an independent review? If not, please explain why not.
- 2) How many individuals in the White House Counsel’s Office were involved in this weekend review?
- 3) How many total hours were spent on the weekend review?
- 4) Was the review coordinated in any way with the Department of Defense to the extent that it covered military employees of the White House Communications Agency (WHCA)?
- 5) Were civilian employees of WHCA also examined?
- 6) How many White House advance staff were in Colombia prior to the President’s arrival?
- 7) How long before the President’s arrival where the White House advance staff present?
- 8) How many additional White House staff arrived with the President?
- 9) Did the White House Counsel’s Office review hotel records regarding overnight guests for all White House advance staff as well as additional White House Staff who arrived with the President (“other White House staff”) in Cartagena, Colombia? If so, for what time frame were records reviewed?
- 10) How many White House advance staff had overnight guests?
- 11) How many other White House staff had overnight guests?

⁵ Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies. Transparency and Open Government. http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/TransparencyandOpenGovernment. January 21, 2009.

- 12) If there were overnight guests, did any White House advance staff or other White House staff with overnight guests pay additional room charges as a result?
- 13) Did the White House Counsel's Office interview all White House advance staff and other White House staff? If not, why not?
- 14) Please provide a detailed overview of all the steps the White House Counsel's Office took to investigate this matter.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request. I would appreciate your response by April 26, 2012, as it only took a weekend to conduct this review, it should not take long to respond to these questions. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please do not hesitate to contact [REDACTED] my staff at (202) 224-5225.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member