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September 28, 2017

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

According to reports, the travel of Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price by private plane on a number of occasions for official duties¹ has cost taxpayers an estimated \$400,000.² This week, Secretary Price's office said, "he has used charter aircraft for official business in order to accommodate his demanding schedule."³ Yet Secretary Price's immediate predecessors flew commercially when traveling for official business within the continental United States.⁴

Secretary Price has now said he will stop taking charter trips until the Inspector General for the Department of Health and Human Services completes its review of his travel.⁵ This development should be copied government-wide. Federal regulations specifically prohibit official travel by chartered jet when it is not the most cost-effective mode of travel "because the taxpayers should pay no more than necessary for your transportation."⁶ Considering the many travel options to and from Washington, D.C., I'm urging you to emphasize to cabinet secretaries the necessity of using reasonable and cost-effective modes of travel in accordance with federal restrictions.

¹ Dan Diamond & Rachana Pradhan, *Price's private-jet travels included visits with colleagues, lunch with son*, POLITICO (Sept. 26, 2017), <http://www.politico.com/story/2017/09/26/tom-price-private-jets-243176>; Rachana Pradhan & Dan Diamond, *Price traveled by private plane at least 24 times*, POLITICO (Sept. 21, 2017), <http://www.politico.com/story/2017/09/21/tom-price-private-charter-plane-flights-242989>.

² Dan Diamond, *Tom Price to halt taxpayer-funded travel on private jets*, POLITICO (Sept. 23, 2017), <http://www.politico.com/story/2017/09/23/tom-price-private-jet-travel-review-hhs-243057>.

³ Pradhan & Diamond, *supra* note 1.

⁴ Dan Diamond & Rachana Pradhan, *Price's private-jet travel breaks precedent*, POLITICO (Sept. 19, 2017), <http://www.politico.com/story/2017/09/19/tom-price-chartered-planes-flights-242908>.

⁵ Alex Pappas, *HHS Secretary price will stop using private planes until internal review is completed*, FOX NEWS (Sept. 23, 2017), <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2017/09/23/hhs-secretary-price-defends-use-private-planes-but-admits-optics-dont-look-good.html>. See also Diamond, *supra* note 2.

⁶ Federal Travel Regulation System, 41 CFR § 301-10.260. See also Federal Travel Regulation System, 41 CFR § 301-10.403 (clarifying the meaning of government aircraft); U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVS., HHS TRAVEL POLICY MANUAL, section 3.3.1 (2014) (accessible at https://www.psc.gov/docs/default-source/travel/2012_policy_manual.pdf?sfvrsn=4) ("Travel must be most advantageous to the Government, when cost and other factors are considered; travel must be by the most expeditious means of transportation practicable and commensurate with the nature and purpose of the duties involved.").

In addition to Secretary Price, there are questions about the travel expenses of EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin.⁷ The EPA Office of Inspector General is reviewing whether Administrator Pruitt adhered to EPA's travel policies and procedures when reportedly taking numerous trips to his home state of Oklahoma with questionable value to the federal taxpayers. The media have since reported military flights for Administrator Pruitt, including one to accommodate a flight to Italy for meetings with international environmental ministers and Vatican officials. Government officials sometimes join already scheduled military flights, and the EPA should explain whether that is the case with Administrator Pruitt's use of military planes or whether the agency is imposing additional costs to taxpayers with such flights. The Treasury Office of Inspector General reportedly is reviewing the use of a government plane by Secretary Mnuchin to Kentucky and the use of a government plane from New York City to Washington, D.C.

Given the news reports and inspector general reviews at three agencies, please detail what steps the administration has taken to ensure that cabinet secretaries use the most fiscally responsible travel in accordance with the public trust they hold and the spirit and letter of all laws, regulations, and policies that apply.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary

⁷ Jim Puzzanghera, *Treasury inspector general looking into Steve Mnuchin's request for a military jet for his honeymoon*, L.A. TIMES (Sept. 14, 2017), <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-mnuchin-honeymoon-aircraft-20170914-htmstory.html>; Rene Marsh, *EPA inspector general investigating Pruitt's travel to home state*, CNN (Aug. 28, 2017), <http://www.cnn.com/2017/08/28/politics/scott-pruitt-travel-preliminary-investigation/index.html>.