

**ANTI-AMERICAN AIRWAVES:  
HOLDING THE HEADS OF NPR AND PBS  
ACCOUNTABLE**

---

**HEARING**

BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DELIVERING ON  
GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY  
OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT  
AND GOVERNMENT REFORM  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS  
FIRST SESSION

MARCH 26, 2025

**Serial No. 119–14**

Printed for the use of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform



Available on: *govinfo.gov*  
*oversight.house.gov* or  
*docs.house.gov*

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

59–845 PDF

WASHINGTON : 2025

## COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

JAMES COMER, Kentucky, Chairman

JIM JORDAN, Ohio	GERALD E. CONNOLLY, Virginia, <i>Ranking</i>
MIKE TURNER, Ohio	<i>Minority Member</i>
PAUL GOSAR, Arizona	ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, District of
VIRGINIA FOXX, North Carolina	Columbia
GLENN GROTHMAN, Wisconsin	STEPHEN F. LYNCH, Massachusetts
MICHAEL CLOUD, Texas	RAJA KRISHNAMOORTHY, Illinois
GARY PALMER, Alabama	RO KHANNA, California
CLAY HIGGINS, Louisiana	KWEISI MFUME, Maryland
PETE SESSIONS, Texas	SHONTEL BROWN, Ohio
ANDY BIGGS, Arizona	MELANIE STANSBURY, New Mexico
NANCY MACE, South Carolina	ROBERT GARCIA, California
PAT FALLON, Texas	MAXWELL FROST, Florida
BYRON DONALDS, Florida	SUMMER LEE, Pennsylvania
SCOTT PERRY, Pennsylvania	GREG CASAR, Texas
WILLIAM TIMMONS, South Carolina	JASMINE CROCKETT, Texas
TIM BURCHETT, Tennessee	EMILY RANDALL, Washington
MARJORIE TAYLOR GREENE, Georgia	SUHAS SUBRAMANYAM, Virginia
LAUREN BOEBERT, Colorado	YASSAMIN ANSARI, Arizona
ANNA PAULINA LUNA, Florida	WESLEY BELL, Missouri
NICK LANGWORTHY, New York	LATEEFAH SIMON, California
ERIC BURLISON, Missouri	DAVE MIN, California
ELI CRANE, Arizona	AYANNA PRESSLEY, Massachusetts
BRIAN JACK, Georgia	RASHIDA TLAIB, Michigan
JOHN MCGUIRE, Virginia	
BRANDON GILL, Texas	

---

MARK MARIN, Staff Director  
JAMES RUST, Deputy Staff Director  
MITCH BENZINE, General Counsel  
PETER WARREN, Senior Advisor  
LISA PIRANEO, Senior Professional Staff Member  
BILLY GRANT, Professional Staff Member  
MALLORY COGAR, Deputy Director of Operations and Chief Clerk

CONTACT NUMBER: 202-225-5074

JAMIE SMITH, Minority Staff Director

CONTACT NUMBER: 202-225-5051

---

## SUBCOMMITTEE ON DELIVERING ON GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

MARJORIE TAYLOR GREENE, Georgia, Chairwoman

MICHAEL CLOUD, Texas	MELANIE STANSBURY, New Mexico <i>Ranking</i>
PAT FALLON, Texas	<i>Minority Member</i>
WILLIAM TIMMONS, South Carolina	ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, District of
TIM BURCHETT, Tennessee	Columbia
ERIC BURLISON, Missouri	STEPHEN LYNCH, Massachusetts
BRIAN JACK, Georgia	ROBERT GARCIA, California
BRANDON GILL, Texas	GREG CASAR, Texas
	JASMINE CROCKETT, Texas

## C O N T E N T S

---

	Page
Hearing held on March 26, 2025 .....	1

### WITNESSES

---

Ms. Katherine Maher, Chief Executive Officer and President, National Public Radio	
Oral Statement .....	6
Ms. Paula A. Kerger, President and Chief Executive Officer, Public Broadcasting Service	
Oral Statement .....	7
Mr. Michael Gonzalez, Angeles T. Arredondo E Pluribus Unum Senior Fellow, The Heritage Foundation	
Oral Statement .....	9
Mr. Ed Ulman (Minority Witness), President and CEO, Alaska Public Media	
Oral Statement .....	11

*Written opening statements and bios are available on the U.S. House of Representatives Document Repository at: docs.house.gov.*

### INDEX OF DOCUMENTS

---

- \* Rural Sign-On Statement, Multiple Public Radio Stations; submitted by Rep. Connolly.
- \* Statement for the Record, DPE AFL-CIO; submitted by Rep. Connolly.
- \* Statement for the Record, ETV South Carolina Statement; submitted by Rep. Connolly.
- \* Statement for the Record, Gassiot TPR; submitted by Rep. Connolly.
- \* Statement for the Record, KANW; submitted by Rep. Connolly.
- \* Statement for the Record, KENW TV & FM; submitted by Rep. Connolly.
- \* Statement for the Record, KERA; submitted by Rep. Connolly.
- \* Statement for the Record, KRPS; submitted by Rep. Connolly.
- \* Statement for the Record, Ozarks Public Broadcasting Statement; submitted by Rep. Connolly.
- \* Statement for the Record, SCPR; submitted by Rep. Connolly.
- \* Statement for the Record, Tim Franklin - Medill School of Journalism; submitted by Rep. Connolly.
- \* Statement for the Record, TPR Board; submitted by Rep. Connolly.
- \* Statement for the Record, WABE; submitted by Rep. Connolly.
- \* Statement for the Record, WAMU; submitted by Rep. Connolly.
- \* Statement for the Record, WBUR; submitted by Rep. Connolly.

## INDEX OF DOCUMENTS

---

- \* Statement for the Record, WEKU; submitted by Rep. Connolly.
- \* Statement for the Record, WNIN Radio and TV; submitted by Rep. Connolly.
- \* Statement for the Record, WTIP; submitted by Rep. Connolly.
- \* Representative Statement Letter, Mike Gonzalez; submitted by Rep. Greene.
- \* Article, *The Free Press*, “NPR Editor Uri Berliner: Here’s How We Lost America’s Trust”; submitted by Rep. Cloud.
- \* Press Release, FEMA, 2019 Report; submitted by Rep. Crockett.
- \* Article, NPR, “What Biden’s preemptive pardons for family members could mean for presidential powers”; submitted by Rep. Garcia.
- \* Article, *Free Press*, “Uri Berliner: NPR Should Refuse to Take Federal Funds”; submitted by Rep. Greene.
- \* Rural Sign-On Statement, Multiple Public Radio Stations; submitted by Rep. Lynch.
- \* Statement for the Record, GPB; submitted by Rep. Lynch.
- \* Statement for the Record, WKMS; submitted by Rep. Lynch.

*Documents are available at: docs.house.gov.*

## **ANTI-AMERICAN AIRWAVES: HOLDING THE HEADS OF NPR AND PBS ACCOUNTABLE**

---

**Wednesday, March 26, 2025**

**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DELIVERING ON GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY  
*Washington, D.C.***

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:05 a.m., in room HVC-210, Capitol Visitors Center, Hon. Marjorie Taylor Greene [Chairwoman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Greene, Comer, Cloud, Fallon, Timmons, Burchett, Burlison, Jack, Gill, Norton, Lynch, Garcia, Casar, and Crockett.

Also present: Representatives Jordan, Khanna, and Randall.

Ms. GREENE. This hearing of the Subcommittee on Delivering on Government Efficiency will come to order. Welcome, everyone.

Without objection, the Chair may declare a recess at any time.

I recognize myself for the purpose of making an opening statement.

Good morning. At the DOGE Subcommittee we are continuing our war on waste. That means rooting out spending that is unnecessary, wasteful, and, frankly, un-American. Today, we are looking at the more than half a billion dollars Federal taxpayers spend annually to fund public radio and television. A big chunk of this subsidy flows to National Public Radio and Public Broadcasting Service.

NPR and PBS are the big D.C.-based entities that create and distribute much of the news and educational content heard and seen on public radio and TV stations across the country. When Congress adopted the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, it did so because it thought at the time that Federal dollars were needed to provide objective news and education content to the entire Nation, including rural residents who lived “off the grid.” Fast forward a few decades, and a lot has changed. The invention of the internet, for instance, and social media, it has made news and information widely available to those living in remote areas. Americans are increasingly consuming digital media and podcasts. The audience of public radio and television is declining, and I know this because I represent a rural district where farmers listen to podcasts and internet-based news while they drive their tractors.

At the same time, NPR and PBS have increasingly become radical, left-wing echo chambers for a narrow audience of mostly wealthy, White, urban liberals and progressives who generally look down on and judge rural America. PBS News is not just left-leaning, but it actively uses taxpayer funds to push some of the most radical left positions, like featuring a drag queen on the show, “Let’s Learn,” a show targeted toward young children ages three to eight years old.

I want you to know I grew up watching children’s programming on PBS, and as a mother who raised three children, I felt confident that I could leave the room while my own children were watching children’s programming on PBS. But I can tell you right now, Ms. Kerger, specifically, as a mother, if I had walked in my living room or one of my children’s bedrooms and seen this child predator and this monster targeting my children, I would have become unglued, and that is how most parents feel all over this country.

This is not the only example of them sexualizing and grooming children. They have been doing it for over the last decade. In 2015, PBS-produced Frontline put out a documentary, “Growing Up Trans,” that takes viewers on an intimate and eye-opening journey inside the struggles and choices facing transgender kids and their families. This means that PBS is one of the founders of the trans child abuse industry, all while taking taxpayer money. Brainwashing and transing children is an issue so hated by parents across the country that it was a driving force in the landslide Republican and Trump victory in the 2024 election cycle and Presidential race.

The news that these entities produce is either resented or increasingly tuned out and turned off by most of the hardworking Americans who are forced to pay for it. They no longer view NPR and PBS as trusted news sources. As a matter of fact, with these people, they are a threat. In fact, when Elon Musk put his hand over his heart and extended it and told the American people his heart goes out to them, PBS News posted the clip, called it a fascist Nazi salute, and described how it was similar to the same “heil” used by Nazis at their victory rallies. Not once did PBS or NPR report on the numerous accounts of Democrats making the same gesture: AOC, Kamala Harris, Barack Obama, Elizabeth Warren, somebody that lost a Presidential race, Hillary Clinton, Governor Tim Walz. Why wasn’t this treated exactly the same way? Is there not a standard in journalism today? Apparently not.

“Here is How We Lost America’s Trust,” was, in fact, the title of a powerful essay written last year by Uri Berliner, a veteran NPR editor. In his essay, Berliner described how NPR’s downward spiral accelerated greatly during the first Trump Administration. He said NPR dedicated efforts to damage the Trump presidency via relentless pursuit of Russiagate rumors that the Trump campaign colluded with Russia over the election. NPR hosts interviewed Adam Schiff, then the top Democrat of the House Intelligence Committee, 25 times about Trump and Russia, but they made no apologies when the Mueller Report found no evidence that the Trump Campaign had colluded with Russia, because they did not.

Berliner also described NPR’s passionate embrace of the left-wing DEI ideology that Americans clearly reject, as evidenced by

the November elections. NPR's language and style guides were shaped by race and gender-based affinity groups that dominated the internal culture of the organization, and NPR journalists were to ask everyone they interviewed their race, gender, and ethnicity and enter it into a centralized tracking system. This tracking system embeds DEI into the fibers of its content. Sounds like racism to me. It is a software attached to NPR's content management system where these reporters and producers submit information about their source's race and ethnicity, gender identity, geographic location—that is kind of scary—and age range. The tool allows NPR to track the demographics of their sources in real time to allow for source diversity. The irony of these supposed diverse sources is that NPR has no interest, real interest, in diversity, like having diverse viewpoints.

Berliner tried to sound the alarm on this when he checked voter registration records of the editors at D.C.'s NPR headquarters and found 87 registered Democrats and zero registered Republicans, but NPR treated Berliner like a political dissident in the old Soviet Union. He was driven out of the organization and forced to resign. Sounds like communism. And the ringleader of that effort was NPR's then newly appointed CEO, Katherine Maher, who is before us today. She dismissed Mr. Berliner's wake-up call as profoundly disrespectful, hurtful, and demeaning. In other words, instead of viewing it as a chance to finally right the ship at NPR, she doubled down. In doing so, she made it clear how any further internal dissent would be dealt with on her watch. That does sound like communist China at the taxpayer's expense.

And no one should be surprised. NPR installed her in the top job after Ms. Maher was firmly on record with a litany of public comments and social media posts displaying her ultra-progressive views, her scorn for free speech, and her fondness for censorship. So, now it is up to Congress to determine if Americans are going to continue to provide her and the organization that put her in charge willingly, after they knew these things, with taxpayer funds to continue to pursue their progressive, or rather, communist agenda. For far too long Federal taxpayers have been forced to fund biased news. This needs to come to an end, and it needs to come to an end now. So, I am glad Ms. Maher and Ms. Kerger accepted our invitation to show up today and be held accountable to the taxpayers. I look forward to them answering our questions in full public view and explaining to the American people why they think they deserve Americans' hard-earned taxpayer money.

I request unanimous consent that Representative Jim Jordan from Ohio, Representative Ro Khanna from California, Representative Emily Randall from Washington be waived on to today's hearing for the purpose of asking questions.

Without objection, so ordered.

And with that, I yield to Ranking Member Lynch for his opening statement.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to thank the witnesses for your willingness to come forward and offer your advice and testimony to this Committee.

Madam Chair, for over 2 decades of service on this Oversight Committee, I have worked with Members on both sides of the aisle

to investigate issues of critical importance to the safety and security of the American people, including the conduct of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, terrorist attacks against the U.S. compound classified annex in Benghazi, and several major intelligence and security breaches under Democratic and Republican administrations. So, I am sad to see that this once-proud Committee, the principal investigative committee in the House of Representatives, has now stooped to the lowest levels of partisanship and political theater to hold a hearing to go after the likes of Elmo and Cookie Monster and Arthur the Aardvark, all for the unforgivable sin of teaching the alphabet to low-income families' children and providing accessible local news and programming.

This hearing also comes at the direction of President Trump and Elon Musk, who have repeatedly called for the defunding of all public media and claimed that media organizations, such as PBS and NPR, are "a liberal disinformation machine." Meanwhile, the Trump Administration is engaged in an actual disinformation campaign to minimize the catastrophic national security breach that was revealed earlier this week. As reported by *Atlantic* editor-in-chief, Jeffrey Goldberg, Mr. Goldberg was inadvertently added to a group chat on an unauthorized, non-secure, publicly available message app in which Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth disclosed "operational details of forthcoming strikes on Yemen," including information about targets, weapon systems, and other actions the U.S. would be taking, and also attack sequencing.

I want to remind my colleagues in Congress that Federal law makes it a crime when a person, through gross negligence, removes information relating to national defense from its proper place of custody or deliver to anyone in violation of this trust, ought to be lost, stolen, or abstracted, or destroyed. And what is more, if evidence shows that any of the parties who were in on that Signal chat lied under oath in the Senate yesterday, Mr. Ratcliffe or Ms. Gabbard, for instance, then certainly conspiracy to conceal that breach would be far worse where censure or criminal intent is in evidence, and would be more likely to invite culpability and possible criminal liability. The Secretary of Defense would be subject to criminal prosecution, and it would be the responsibility of the U.S. Attorney General to prosecute that, but where a conflict exists, it might require a special prosecutor.

This security breach severely compromised the safety of American troops in advance of imminent U.S. operations and airstrikes against Houthi rebel positions. It is well documented that the Houthi arsenal includes anti-aircraft capability, ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, rockets, and unmanned aerial attack drones. Mr. Goldberg, who was unwittingly elevated to the clearance level afforded to members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was also joined in the exposed group chat by Vice President J.D. Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and National Security Advisor Mike Waltz, and other senior members of President Trump's national security team. This Committee should be questioning every single one of them as to why they were using an unapproved, unsecure messaging app to conduct sensitive classified discussions about military operations in which our sons and daughters in uniform are being sent into battle.



One of the participants was actually sitting in Russia—sitting in Russia—using an unsecure app, and every Member of this Committee knows what that means. We have all been advised about which apps are secure and insecure and when it is appropriate to engage in non-critical discussions. As former Chairman of our Subcommittee on National security, I recall a time when just the potential for a security breach that could expose American troops and intelligence personnel to unnecessary danger would immediately trigger hearings and bring this Committee to a lather on both sides. But you can bet we will not be touching this issue because, today, the controlling House Majority is afraid to do its job. It is afraid to hold Trump and Trump's Administration accountable. They would rather post up against Big Bird than deal with that issue.

In reference to public media, Elon Musk recently asked should your tax dollars really be paying for an organization run by people who think the truth is a distraction. Well, I would say the same about the current Administration and its proliferation of disinformation, from claims that Ukraine started its own invasion, to Secretary Hegseth's assertion that no one was texting war plans. You can read the text today because yesterday in the hearing they said it was not classified information. So, you can actually go on *The New York Times* website and read the text that was discussed in advance of our military operations in Yemen.

Madam Chair, if shame was still a thing, this hearing would be shameful, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. GREENE. I am pleased to introduce our witnesses today. Paula Kerger is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Public Broadcasting Service, also known as PBS. Katherine Maher is the President and Chief Executive Officer of National Public Radio, also known as NPR. Mike Gonzalez is the Angeles T. Arredondo E Pluribus Unum senior fellow at the Heritage Foundation. Ed Ulman is the President and CEO of Alaska Public Media. Again, I want to thank you all for being here to testify today.

Pursuant to Committee Rule 9(g), the witnesses will please stand and raise their right hand.

Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony that you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

[A chorus of ayes.]

Ms. GREENE. Let the record show that the witnesses answered in the affirmative. Thank you. You may take a seat. We appreciate you being here today and look forward to your testimony.

Let me remind the witnesses that we have read your written statement, and it will appear in full in the hearing record. Please limit your oral statement to 5 minutes. As a reminder, please press the button on the microphone in front of you so that it is on and the Members can hear you. When you begin to speak, the light in front of you will turn green. After 4 minutes, the light will turn yellow. When the red light comes on, your 5 minutes have expired, and we would ask that you please do your best to wrap up.

I now recognize Katherine Maher for her opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF KATHERINE MAHER  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND PRESIDENT  
NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO**

Ms. MAHER. Chairwoman Greene, Ranking Member Lynch, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, my name is Katherine Maher, and I am the President and CEO of National Public Radio and I welcome the opportunity to discuss the essential role of public media in delivering unbiased, nonpartisan, fact-based reporting to Americans.

Americans listen to public radio as they commute, as they work, and in the kitchen as they cook with family. Nearly 100 percent of Americans live within range of a public radio station. We cover what matters to local communities—crop prices, cook-offs, and local sports teams—alongside news of the Nation and the world, from the halls of Congress to coverage of our troops overseas. Today, Americans have more media choices than ever. The rise of podcasting has established a competitive free market for audio news and information, and every day I am honored to know that we have 43 million listeners from every state in the Nation.

Amidst this competition, local stations choose to become members of NPR for the value we provide. For example, we are the only non-paywalled news outlet with a dedicated reporter covering veterans' issues. While NPR is only 25 percent of station programming on average, audiences for NPR bring the scale and revenue that subsidize essential local programming. Local public media journalism has never been more important to American families who consider it part of the fabric of their communities. It correlates with higher rates of civic engagement, greater civic cohesion, and economic advantages, such as better municipal bond ratings. Recent independent polling found that more than 60 percent of all Americans, and more than half of Republicans, trust public broadcasting to deliver fact-based news.

I understand the Subcommittee has questions about funding for NPR and public radio. The vast majority of Federal dollars, more than \$100 million of the \$121 million annual appropriation for public radio, goes directly to 386 local non-commercial stations across the Nation. This highly efficient investment enables your local stations to raise an average of \$7 for every Federal dollar.

As a grantee of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, NPR received Federal funding of \$11.2 million last year. These funds allow us to maintain the National Public Radio Satellite System, helping safeguard our national security, civil defense, and disaster response, and enabling public radio to reach every corner of America. Additionally, these funds help protect journalists covering our troops overseas and reverse the decline of local journalism.

As a recipient of Federal funds, it is our responsibility to answer legitimate questions about why public funds should go to NPR, whether we are truly committed to serving all Americans, and whether the institution is an effective steward of taxpayer dollars. I hear, respect, and understand your concerns regarding bias and whether public media is relevant in a commercial landscape, and I would like to spend a minute sharing with you my actions to address your concerns.

First, it is critical for NPR's newsroom to operate with the highest journalistic standards. That means that they do their jobs independently, and as CEO, I have no editorial role at NPR. In other words, I do not decide what we cover or how we cover it. I lead NPR's strategy, ensuring we have resources and policies in place to serve all Americans, not just those with a specific point of view. I was brought into NPR to revive and reorient the organization and bring public media to a wider audience, a new generation, and new platforms. We have a responsibility to serve Americans across the full political spectrum in a trustworthy, nonpartisan fashion. It is essential that we deliver on this commitment, and we have work to do, and we are doing it.

In May, we launched an initiative to improve our editorial review processes to make sure all pieces are fair and comprehensive. We hired new editors and analysts to ensure we are giving fair airtime to different voices and issues. We started regular meetings with our nearly 200 local newsrooms so we can plan together for the needs of their audiences, and the early results are positive. Our digital platforms, where we have the best data about our listeners, the political beliefs of our visitors mirror the makeup of the country across the ideological spectrum, and we are seeing growth in readers and listeners.

I joined NPR because I believe that our strong and dynamic Nation deserves great public media for all. Americans are smart and curious, and they want us to cover issues that matter, from the price of eggs to national security. It is our job to deliver truthful facts and information so citizens can make up their own minds. I believe Americans voted for a transformative administration, and it is our responsibility to cover that transformation fairly, with integrity, and tenacity.

I have been CEO for 1 year and 1 day. I have made changes to leadership and planning, invested in editorial integrity, committed to expanding our audiences and our relevance for all Americans. While we have taken significant steps in the right direction, the journey cannot be completed overnight. Given the support that 75 percent of Americans have for public media, I ask Congress to give us the opportunity to continue to serve the American public. I will invite you to listen with a fresh ear, and to that end, our newsroom invites you to join us on air, and I welcome your questions.

Ms. GREENE. Thank you, Ms. Maher. I now recognize Paula Kerger for her opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF PAULA KERGER  
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
PUBLIC BROADCASTING SERVICE**

Ms. KERGER. Chair Taylor Greene, Congressman Lynch, and Members of the Subcommittee, my name is Paula Kerger, and I am the President and CEO of PBS, a role that I have held for 19 years. It is my honor to be here on behalf of the 336 PBS stations who serve every community in the United States.

There is nothing more American than PBS. As a membership organization, our local service is at the heart of our work. Our job at PBS is to support our stations so that local stations can serve their communities. We have been proudly fulfilling our mission for

nearly 60 years, using the public airwaves and other technologies to help educate, engage, and inspire the American people. That mission is our guide star and remains just as important today as when the Public Broadcasting Act was signed into law in 1967.

PBS stations provide something that cannot be found on commercial networks. This is because PBS stations are focused on the needs and interests of the viewers they serve, especially in rural areas. PBS stations are the only outlet providing coverage of local events, for example, high school sports, local history and culture content, candidate debates at every level of the election ballot, and specialized agricultural news. Local stations also partner with other community organizations to address issues of concern like veterans' affairs and the opioid crisis.

Finally, communities depend on the essential public safety information and emergency alerts our local stations provide. Our programming comes from our local stations. For example, "Southern Storytellers" was produced by Arkansas PBS for our national audience. This program highlighted Southern culture through its literature, music, and film. Across the country, nearly 4 million people watch "Southern Storytellers", helping Americans learn about our shared history and what brings us together as a people and a Nation.

Our stations pool resources to invest in programming that will benefit all Americans, ranging from history and science to art and music. For example, "Firing Line with Margaret Hoover" creates a forum for people with a wide range of views to respectfully share ideas, while programs like Independent Lenses' "Matter of Mind: My Alzheimer's" explores the challenges facing many American families. And we celebrate what makes our country great. "A Capital Fourth" and the "National Memorial Day Concert" honor our Nation's ideals, our servicemembers and our veterans. Looking ahead, we will mark our Nation's 250th birthday with a landmark initiative headlined by a new major series from Ken Burns, "The American Revolution".

Our educational programming for children is one of the most important aspects of our service to the American people. I strongly believe that the programming we offer to prepare children for the future is the most essential work that we do. Today, more than half of all preschool-aged children are not enrolled in pre-kindergarten programs. Our content has helped tens of millions of children prepare for success in school and in life with free programming that is available everywhere children are, on air, online, and in the classroom. Our educational programming is backed by scores of research studies showing that our programs, like "Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood" and "Super Why!" help kids develop essential skills like reading, math, and problem solving.

We are proud that nearly 9 out of 10 families agree that PBS is the most trusted, safe, and educational media brand for children. Because our programming is free and universally available, we are able to reach more low-income families than any other media company. In fact, our viewers overall reflect the wide variety of communities we serve. Our audience mirrors the overall U.S. population with respect to education, income, and geography. Each month, over 160 million television and online viewers explore the

world through our trusted content, and more than three-quarters of Americans feel that PBS stations provide excellent value to their communities.

For over 2 decades, the American public has consistently ranked public television as one of the best investments the government makes. More than 70 percent of the CPB funds from Congress go directly to our stations, and for every dollar of that vital seed money, local stations raise seven to support their work. This is one of the best, most successful examples of a public-private partnership.

When I think about the need for our service, I think of a man I met during a visit to a local station in Nebraska. He was a rancher with young children, and he drove hours to attend a local station event. He pulled me aside and told me this: "We need PBS. We do not live near a preschool. My children have learned to read watching PBS shows, and the shows we watch on PBS are our connection to the rest of America." That is why PBS and the 336 local stations in your communities do what we do. PBS programming and the services that local stations provide bring Americans together. It is valued, needed, and trusted by the American people.

I appreciate the opportunity to be here today, and I look forward to your questions.

Ms. GREENE. Thank you, Ms. Kerger. I now recognize Mike Gonzalez for his opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF MICHAEL GONZALEZ  
ANGELES T. ARREDONDO E PLURIBUS UNUM SENIOR  
FELLOW  
THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION**

Mr. GONZALEZ. Thank you, Chairwoman Taylor Greene, Ranking Member Lynch, for allowing me to appear before you today.

My name is Mike Gonzalez. I am a Senior Fellow at The Heritage Foundation. The views expressed are my own and should not be construed as representing any official position of The Heritage Foundation.

Before joining Heritage 16 years ago, I was a journalist for many years. I worked in Latin America, Asia, and Europe, traveled with the Mujahedeen in Afghanistan, was arrested in Panama, witnessed China's takeover of Hong Kong, and covered the stock market for *The Wall Street Journal*. I have even covered high school sports. I know that journalists can keep their prejudices in check, that is, if they want to. This ability to give all sides a hearing becomes an even more serious obligation when taxpayers are coerced to pay for you. Yet NPR, PBS, and the other state broadcasters refuse to abide by the simple code of decency. For decades, they have asked for more money while telling conservatives to get lost. But the Nation today is in a very different place, with \$36 trillion in debt, and more importantly, we are seeing not just a shift in our cultural vibe, but a shift in societal paradigms. Through their egregious bias, NPR and PBS have violated the public trust. Public media needs to be defunded and the CPB needs to be dissolved.

It is a matter of simple fairness. Multiple arguments can be made. I will list just a few. We are deeply in debt. No. 2, the arrangement is unfair to private sector media competitors. No. 3,

public broadcasting was created with the promise that it would be educational, but now that thousands of competitors have come on-line, public media has become, as George Will says, like the human appendix, vestigial and purposeless. The funding is a regressive tax, an obnoxious wealth transfer from working families to the affluent, but the ultimate factor is the broadcaster's unforgivable political bias. What we have today is a circular undemocratic relationship. Democrats unanimously vote for more and more money for public media, and, in exchange, public media heavily tips the scale in their favor. It is a nice arrangement for them, but it must end. NPR's and PBS's full-hearted embrace of progressive views and constant denigration of conservative ones is quantifiable.

Thank you. I refer you to my written testimony. Besides my own examples, I cite the research of Tim Graham as well as NPR veteran Uri Berliner, who says, "An open-minded spirit no longer exists within NPR." Rather than pause and reflect, NPR instead chose to circle the wagons and assassinate Berliner's character. This is part of a pattern. In 2010, NPR fired Juan Williams and vilified him as a psycho after he dared to flout the network's progressive orthodoxy. The people running NPR remain, in Mr. Williams' words, an insulated cadre of people who think they are right and who have a hard time with people who are different. They went completely off the rails when Donald Trump was elected in 2016. Coverage "veered toward efforts to topple the Trump presidency," Berliner said.

NPR hitched its wagon to the false claim that Russia had colluded with the Trump campaign. It also refused to cover the Hunter-Biden laptop story. After the 2020 riots, NPR firmly sided with those who affirmed, without a shred of evidence, that America is an oppressive society gripped by systemic racism. NPR and PBS even justified looting. Rather than just then use journalism as a truth-seeking tool, NPR and PBS distorted journalism to further a political agenda. Yamiche Alcindor, the liberal activist that PBS hired to cover the White House, routinely used the platform to make unsubstantiated allegations against President Trump. President Biden, she presented as "a moral and decent man."

Consider Katherine Maher's appointment as NPR CEO. Her long record of comments leave zero doubt that she is not only a committed progressive, but someone whose disdain for free expression disqualifies her from being anywhere close to the levers of power at a media institution. And what does she think of President Trump? He is "a deranged, racist sociopath." Ms. Maher is an American. She is entitled to her views. The question is whether NPR is entitled to appoint her as CEO and then ask conservatives to just pony up.

Public media's main argument now is that it is essential for weather emergencies in hard-to-reach places and that without public money, local news will cease to exist, but over 98 percent of Americans today have a mobile phone. Even Alaska, one of our most isolated states, has high levels of internet penetration. As for the claim that the taxpayer is the last available business model for local news, NPR and PBS are asking us to believe something laughable, that the government can fund a media structure that ac-

tually keeps the government in check. I urge you not to try to mend public broadcasting. End it.

Thank you very much for your attention, and I look forward to your questions.

Ms. GREENE. Thank you, Mr. Gonzalez. I now recognize Ed Ulman for his opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF ED ULMAN  
PRESIDENT AND CEO  
ALASKA PUBLIC MEDIA**

Mr. ULMAN. Madam Chair, Ranking Member, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, it is an honor to be here today. My name is Ed Ulman. I am the President and CEO of Alaska Public Media. The people of Alaska rely on public media to provide free universal access to essential services in public safety, education, and community connections. This includes potentially lifesaving alerts, updates on community affairs, coverage of state and local government, proven educational content engagement services, and local and national news.

In many parts of Alaska and communities throughout the country, public media is often the only locally operated, locally controlled broadcasting service. We are more than nice to have. We are essential, especially in remote and rural places where commercial broadcasting cannot succeed. We provide potentially lifesaving warnings and alerts that are crucial for Alaskans who face threats ranging from extreme weather to earthquakes, landslides, and even volcanoes. Nationwide, our public television interconnection system supports the PBS Warning Alert Response Network, a critical pathway for the distribution of wireless emergency alerts to cell phones.

Public television pioneered data casting technology to enable public safety officials to communicate with each other without the need for broadband or cell service. In partnership with the Department of Homeland Security, public television has proven how this technology can assist rural search and rescue, over water communications, large event crowd control, and even school safety incidents. Alaskans use our services to connect to their communities and the broader world through access to local public and government affairs, agricultural news, local history and culture, as well as local and national educational content and news. Our programming caters to and is informed by the specific needs of the communities we serve.

Just to give a few examples, "Indie Alaska", an award-winning series of documentaries, captures Alaska's people, places, and their unique stories. "Alaska Insight" is a weekly public affairs program that moves the conversation beyond the headlines and right into Alaska's communities. Our radio station hosts Alaska's only statewide call-in programs, "Talk of Alaska" and "Line One: Your Health Connection". We reach across Alaska with these essential free services through a statewide network consisting of four TV channels and one radio station. We coordinate the only statewide news network which includes 27 independent radio stations across Alaska, and we operate the Alaska Rural Communication System,

which provides free over-the-air television and radio programming to 100 rural communities.

Alaska Public Media is one of more than 360 locally controlled and operated public television stations and over 1,000 public radio stations throughout the country that provide critical services to address the broad range of interest and views of our local communities. These stations collectively reach nearly 99 percent of the American public, regardless of zip code or income level. This nationwide service would not be possible without Federal support. Today, over 70 percent of the Federal funds for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting go directly to stations just like ours. Our system leverages this crucial seed money seven times over in highly efficient public-private partnerships.

Reducing or eliminating Federal funding would be devastating and could cause the closure of many stations, especially the most rural and remote.

Our highest costs come from maintaining broadcast and IT infrastructure, local programming, and community engagement, all of which would be in serious jeopardy without Federal funding. Cuts to our national partners, PBS and NPR, would have a similar impact, particularly in small and rural markets. The broad range of news and educational programming that we receive from these organizations is popular with Alaskans. Without this national content, we would receive less local support, endangering the local services we provide. This national-local model efficiently leverages economies of scale and allows us to provide the unique mix of local programming and national content that Alaskans want.

Congress' support for the mission of public broadcasting, to provide every American access to free, non-commercial, quality educational programming, remains critical. It allows us to connect Alaskans with each other and with our neighbors in the lower 48 and to connect the Nation with us. I urge Congress to maintain Federal funding for public broadcasting, to ensure that local stations around the country can continue to provide essential services to their local areas. I welcome your questions.

Ms. GREENE. Thank you, Mr. Ulman. I now recognize myself for 5 minutes of questions.

Ms. Maher, your public statements and social media posts reflect left-wing ideology and blatant opposition to free speech. After all, you were the head of Wikipedia for many years, which is a platform that does not tell the truth. Let us walk through some of your statements so the public can understand your personal views. You said your fellow Americans just elected Donald Trump as President again this past November. You called him "a deranged racist and sociopath." You posted on X that America is addicted to White supremacy. It is appalling. You have publicly chastised using the phrase "boy and girl," which you said erases the language for non-binary people. There are only two genders, by the way.

Ms. Maher, the Federal funding that your outlet receives comes from all American taxpayer dollars, not just from your viewers who support such statements as these. Let me inform you that your Federal funding is also paid for by the other half of the country, the 77 million Americans who voted for President Trump, someone you called a deranged racist sociopath. Ms. Maher, many find your



pro-censorship and anti-free speech views more concerning than your politics. The only speech you like seems to be speech that you agree with. In 2021, you called the First Amendment the No. 1 challenge in American journalism because it makes it hard to crack down on bad information. You said in a TED Talk that, “Our reverence for the truth might be a distraction.” You have also expressed support for de-platforming individuals you view as fascist. Who do you think should be charged with cracking down on so-called bad information? Is it NPR? Is it the government? Is it you, Ms. Maher?

Ms. MAHER. Congresswoman, Madam Chair, thank you so much for the opportunity to address this. I know——

Ms. GREENE. Is it up to you and NPR to crack down on bad information or decide the truth? Answer the question, yes or no, Ms. Maher.

Ms. MAHER. Absolutely not. I am a very strong believer in free speech, and I believe that more speech——

Ms. GREENE. Your public statements say otherwise. Ms. Maher, in 2021, when speaking at an Atlantic Council event, you said that when you were CEO of Wikipedia, you took a very active approach to disinformation and misinformation. During the COVID pandemic and the 2020 election, you said you censored information through conversations with government. Which governments were those, Ms. Maher, the Biden Administration? Yes or no.

Ms. MAHER. Madam Chair, Wikipedia never censored any information.

Ms. GREENE. These are your public statements, Ms. Maher. Ms. Maher, are you familiar with Section 399(b) of the Communications Act? It prohibits non-commercial education broadcast stations, NCEs, from airing commercials on behalf of for-profit entities. The FCC recently opened an investigation into the underwriting announcements and related policies of NPR and PBS. Does NPR air commercials for for-profit entities, Ms. Maher? Yes or no?

Ms. MAHER. Madam Chair, we are in full compliance with the FCC’s inquiry and will continue to cooperate.

Ms. GREENE. I remind you, you are under oath, and violations of the Communications Act comes with a fine up to \$10,000 and possibly up to a year in prison. Does PBS air for-profit commercials, Ms. Kerger?

Ms. KERGER. We air underwriting announcements and we believe we are in full compliance with the FCC, and we look forward to delivering the material required in this part of this investigation.

Ms. GREENE. We look forward to that, too. I am assuming both of you are concerned about this and that is why you brought so many attorneys with you today. Ms. Kerger, using taxpayer subsidies, PBS funded Independent Lens to make documentaries for part of your programming. In 2016, “Real Boy” was aired about a trans teen navigating adolescent sobriety and the ramification of his gender identity. In 2022, the same series aired “Our League”, in which a trans woman comes to her old school Ohio bowling league in a story about transition. Then in 2024, “Racist Trees” was aired telling a story of how in Palm Springs, a Black neighborhood fights to remove a divisive wall of trees. Do you think PBS

needs to fund ridiculous material such as this that the taxpayers are having to pay for?

Ms. KERGER. These are documentary films that are point-of-view pieces that are part of our primetime schedule for adults.

Ms. GREENE. And parents and adults do not trust that type of programming.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Madam Chair. I ask a unanimous consent to enter into the record this letter from 72 public radio stations serving rural communities across the country where they emphasize how important Federal funding is to the ability to provide vital public safety information.

Ms. GREENE. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. LYNCH. OK. I also have a similar letter from the Georgia PBS NPR station also asking for consideration for Federal funding.

Ms. GREENE. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you. Ms. Kerger and Ms. Maher, can we talk a little bit about the educational service you provide for children of low-income families and how that is received and the trust that you have generated among families in that situation?

Ms. KERGER. Yes, a significant part of our broadcast day is devoted to programming for children. We focus on preschool. That goes back to the legacy of Fred Rogers who believed that media could be a tool to help to instruct children as well as a tool of entertainment. Our programming is focused on core skills that kids need to develop before they enter school, in math and in learning numbers and in learning letters, so that kids that do not have the opportunity to be in a formal pre-K program have a chance to walk into school for the first time on equal footing with kids that have more opportunity. And that is the heart of what we think about in the programming that we develop for kids.

Mr. LYNCH. Independent groups have done assessments on the trust factor that parents have on PBS Kids, which is one of your most popular services. Can you talk about that?

Ms. KERGER. Yes.

Mr. LYNCH. Where do you come in in terms of the comparison to other stations?

Ms. KERGER. Yes. We are the most trusted media brand. In fact, *Parents* magazine this week just ran the results of a study that was done on "Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood", actually looking at 16-year-olds that remember some of the basic skills they learned as small children. And what we are focused on is to make sure, again, that every child has the opportunity to learn and be excited about the world around them when they enter a school for the first time, and to give them those core basic skills that we can see they carry forward in life.

Mr. LYNCH. Ms. Maher, I would like you to focus on the work that public media is doing in relation to public safety communications. How important is this function of public broadcast media? Particularly, I am talking about the most rural, most remote communities in this country.

Ms. MAHER. Thank you so much, Congressman. We are part of the National Next Generation Warning System for which we have received a significant investment over the course of the last few years, and many thanks to Congress for supporting that appropria-

tion. Our stations are busy implementing that across the Nation. We also are part of the statewide emergency plans for more than 20 states. You will see the importance and value of public radio, in particular, when we face extreme weather, for example, weather in Ashland, North Carolina recently. Blue Ridge Public Radio was the only news information source available for nearly 2 weeks as people struggled with outages of water and electricity and certainly outages of cell phones and internet. Recently as well, my colleague from Alaska would be able to speak to Raven Public Media, which had a very similar experience of 2 weeks of outages in which the local media station was, again, the only source of information for that community. When everything else goes down, Public Radio is there, available to first responders to be able to communicate directly about issues of harm and ensure the public has access to vital critical information.

Mr. LYNCH. Now, I mean, there is a lot of information out there, a lot of stations out there, but what is the difference here when you have a paywall-free, non-subscription access for some of these communities?

Ms. MAHER. I think it makes all the difference in the world, sir. As I mentioned in my opening statement, we are one of the only publications in America that has a dedicated veterans beat and the only one without a paywall. I am always struck by something that our veterans reporter told me, which is that a mother of one of our troops deployed overseas came to him and said that for the first time in 9 months she had heard his son's voice. That is something that I believe only public media can do, and it can only do that because it is available to all Americans without any barriers.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you. Madam Chair, I yield back.

Ms. GREENE. I now recognize Chairman Comer from Kentucky for 5 minutes.

Chairman COMER. Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Ulman, I am glad you brought up a point that has been mentioned a couple of times already at the early start of this hearing about rural and remote. And I have to tell the story, when I graduated from college with a degree in agriculture, I went back to rural Monroe County, Kentucky, and worked on a farm, my farm, for 5 years, full-time. I farm to this day, but full-time. I was in a tractor sometimes 10, 12, 14 hours a day, and I listened to the radio, and the only radio station I could get that had news was public radio. So, I listened to as many hours of public radio as anyone on this panel, I can assure you, and it was a great service. That was 30-some years ago.

Today, in that same remote area, I mean, you have got SiriusXM, you have got podcasts, there is internet access now, there is a whole menu of media options now, but over time—and I still occasionally listen to NPR because I just want to hear what they have to say—and I do not even recognize the station anymore. It is not news. I feel like it is propaganda. I feel like there is disinformation every time I listen to NPR. And a media entity like MSNBC or *Huffington Post* that, in my opinion, consistently spews disinformation, they can do that. They are a private company. But NPR gets Federal funds, and I have a problem with that because if people in Alaska, if all they have is public radio, then all they know is what these headlines say. And they are wrong about

COVID-19, and the headlines are in the background. I do not have time to go over all these headlines that are wrong, about Russian collusion, wrong, wrong; about the Hunter Biden laptop, wrong.

And then there is a story about me and part of what we went through on this Committee during the Biden investigation, which, by the way, ended with Joe Biden's last act as President of the United States, pardoned his entire family, preemptively, for an 11-year period, which just so happened to be the 11-year period that this Committee investigated the Bidens, that we had subpoenaed bank records. I do not think NPR reported about the pardons, but they reported a lot about how there was no evidence of any wrongdoing and things that just were not true. In fact, there is a story, NPR, "Lawmaker Leading Hunter Biden House Investigation, Accused of Owning a Shell Company." Well, that is me.

Ms. MAHER, are you familiar with that story that NPR wrote about me at the height of the Biden investigation when you all were disputing every aspect of our investigation that is a hundred percent factual? We have hundreds of pages of evidence, hundreds of pages of bank records, hundreds of pages of emails. Do you remember the story that NPR wrote about me saying I had a shell company?

Ms. MAHER. Congressman, I was not at NPR at the time, and I am unfamiliar with the story.

Chairman COMER. Where do you get your sources on something like that? That is a very serious accusation because we are investigating a President and his family who had 28 shell companies. I have an LLC, had five properties in it. It is in my financial disclosure form. I have gone into great detail, given lots of interviews, but people that listen to NPR, they are totally disinformed on the truth, and I have a problem with that because you get Federal funds. And I do believe there was a role for public radio 30 years ago, maybe 20 years ago, maybe 5 years ago, but because of technology today, I do not think there is a role for public radio anymore.

And I think you have abused the privilege that you had with receiving Federal funds because these headlines here are not true. This is disinformation on some huge topics. Do you want to dispute anything that I said in the remaining 30 seconds?

Ms. MAHER. Thank you, Congressman. First of all, I want to recognize your concerns. One of the first things that I did in coming in in May was to beef up our editorial standards. I directed my editor-in-chief, who, by the way—

Chairman COMER. Why is NPR even doing editorials?

Ms. MAHER. I am so sorry.

Chairman COMER. Should NPR even do editorials?

Ms. MAHER. I do not mean editorial in terms of opinion editorial.

Chairman COMER. Do you even need opinion? What does it matter with opinion? If you are a federally funded entity that is supposed to provide the news, can you not provide the news in balance?

Ms. MAHER. Of course. Of course, Congressman. I mean, editorial standards for our journalism was to beef up our editorial practices, bringing in more editors to make sure that we have more points

of view reflected in every story. I have engaged in a number of actions trying to address some of these concerns.

Chairman COMER. And my time has expired. I have lost confidence in Public Radio. I don't think, Madam Chair, they should get a penny of Federal funds. I yield back.

Ms. GREENE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I now recognize Mr. Garcia from California for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARCIA. Well, thank you, Madam Chairwoman. I want to first begin by thanking all of our witnesses that are here today. I know that there is a lot we should be discussing right now at this hearing. We have of course had some pretty shocking security breaches that we are just learning about through a lot of our national security officials. We know that Pete Hegseth should be removed from office or should resign. We have Donald Trump, who, of course, is crashing the stock market. He has taken away millions—of programs and hurting people across this country to fund tax giveaways to billionaires, and our constituents cannot access their Social Security benefits. Now, I think, actually, Chairwoman Greene supports everything that the Trump Administration is actually doing, so instead of a serious hearing, we are here to attack NPR and PBS. So, let us get right into it.

Now, Ms. Kerger, the American people want to know, is Elmo now or has he ever been a member of the Communist Party of the United States? Yes or no.

Ms. KERGER. No.

Mr. GARCIA. Now, are you sure, Ms. Kerger, because he is obviously red.

Ms. KERGER. Well, he is a puppet, but no.

Mr. GARCIA. Now, that is not all. He also has a very dangerous message about sharing and helping each other. He is indoctrinating our kids that sharing is caring. Now, maybe he is part of a major socialist plot, and maybe that is why the Chairwoman is having this hearing today, but let us talk about somebody else. Let us talk about Cookie Monster. Now, we know that Health Secretary, RFK Jr., is coming out against fast food and baked goods. Are we silencing pro-cookie voters? Yes or no, Ms. Kerger.

Ms. KERGER. The cookies are a sometime food.

Mr. GARCIA. Well, thank you. Now, I agree with you, and let us also talk about the most important, maybe, character on "Sesame Street".

[Photo]

Mr. GARCIA. This is actually Big Bird. Now, Ms. Kerger, since Elon Musk actually fired USDA workers who have been working on the bird flu, does it make sense to also fire Big Bird? Yes or no.

Ms. KERGER. We would like to keep Big Bird.

Mr. GARCIA. I completely agree with you, and now it gets even worse.

[Poster]

Mr. GARCIA. Now, this is actually a tweet that Big Bird actually sent out about the COVID-19 vaccine, encouraging folks to actually get their vaccination, which, of course, we believe in vaccines. Now, perhaps the reason why we are having this hearing is because our Chairwoman, Ms. Greene, has actually said some really negative things about getting vaccinations, and that perhaps is why we are

here. And so, we support Big Bird being pro-vaccine and promoting vaccines across this country. Now, I will admit though, the extreme liberal agenda that you are all pushing, I think, does not stop there. This, of course, is Bert and Ernie. Now, these two guys actually live together. They are friends. They are supportive of each other. Now, that might be triggering to our Chairwoman and someone in this Committee, and perhaps that is also why we are here today. Ms. Kerger, an important question: are Bert and Ernie part of an extreme homosexual agenda?

Ms. KERGER. No.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Ms. Kerger, and thank you for being a good sport. Now, I am obviously using some humor here, but the fact that we are sitting here today talking about defunding public television is actually not funny. At a time where we cannot agree on basic facts and while the free press is under attack, we need public media like PBS and NPR more than ever. A large majority of Americans say they trust PBS, and that is exactly why extremists are trying to tear it down. Public broadcasting is a tool for education, for emergencies, and a cherished part of our national fabric. We get huge benefits from a tiny Federal investment. The Majority and their Chairwoman should drop this attempt to silence media voices they do not like.

So, the message, I think, today is very, very simple. If we are going to get rid of any puppeteers, we should get rid of the one that is actually controlling Donald Trump. Fire Elon Musk and save Elmo. And with that, I yield back.

Ms. GREENE. I now recognize Mr. Cloud from Texas for 5 minutes.

Mr. CLOUD. Thank you, Chairwoman. NPR fancies itself as a nonpartisan news outlet, public information outlet, even says that we should consider all things, all things are considered, yet their history of political bias has shown that there are a number of things they have not considered. They asked us not to consider that the Hunter Biden laptop was real. They dismissed what was always the most probable theory of the COVID lab leak from Wuhan. They interviewed Russia collusion hoaxster, Adam Schiff, 25 times, who claimed to have a vault of information in his office leading to the impeachment of President Trump, which, of course, we now know was all fraudulent.

I would like to submit for the record an article by Uri Berliner, "I Have Been at NPR for 25 Years. Here is How We Lost America's Trust."

Ms. GREENE. Without objection.

Mr. CLOUD. So, NPR, unfortunately, has lost much of the audience that they used to have, and now they have a very partisan audience because of this. Who do they bring in to fix it? They bring in Ms. Maher, who has a history and commentary of promoting Marxist ideology, including critical theory, said we should not use the terms boy or girl, has called our President a deranged racist sociopath, and said that our reverence for the truth has become a distraction that is preventing us from finding consensus and getting important things done. And one could look at that and think that maybe, in your view, promoting groupthink is more important than finding the truth. I thought we liked diversity of ideas, espe-

cially, and that as an online encyclopedia, that you used to manage, activism was more important than accuracy. Now I had an uncle who used to say that you should never let the truth get in the way of a good story, and while that was humorous when we were talking about weekend fishing expeditions, when we are talking about news and information, and encyclopedias, and things that are of national importance, I find that very troubling. Now you are here managing NPR, which is in part federally funded. Can we expect that you will bring the same lack of reverence for truth to your management of NPR?

Ms. MAHER. Thank you, Congressman. First of all, I do want to say that NPR acknowledges that we were mistaken in failing to cover the Hunter Biden laptop story more aggressively and sooner. Our current editorial leadership—

Mr. CLOUD. And Wuhan?

Ms. MAHER. We recognize that we were reporting at the time, but we acknowledge that the new CIA evidence is worthy of coverage and have covered it.

Mr. CLOUD. What have you done to clean up the bias before? You mentioned I was not there for that. What are you doing to clean up and make sure that we have Hunter Biden?

Ms. MAHER. Absolutely. Thank you, Congressman. As I mentioned, I came in in May. Mr. Berliner published his story 2 weeks into my tenure regarding stories that had happened prior. I wish that I had had the opportunity to speak with Mr. Berliner. I would have loved to have had him engage and come back to us with some suggestions as to what we could do editorially in order to address what he perceived as bias.

Mr. CLOUD. Now, you have had a long history, including the thing that I mentioned, about lack of reverence for truth. You have even talked about the First Amendment kind of getting in the way of what you wanted to get done, and then you are wanting us to believe that NPR is now taking this non-biased approach. I mean, where was the come-to-Jesus moment for you, I guess, that has turned you around and that we can trust the American taxpayer dollars with your leadership of NPR?

Ms. MAHER. I so appreciate the opportunity to perhaps clarify some things. My talk about truth was really referencing the way that people use truth to refer to belief as opposed to facts, and my encouragement was that we focus on facts. With regards to the First Amendment—

Mr. CLOUD. That is not what your comment said. Your comment said that truth was getting in the way of getting things done and that you were prioritizing what you wanted to get done over truth, and that is really unfortunate. I want to go to a different context because you are allowed to have your political opinion. Any news organization should be going after the truth. That is what we want and expect out of news organizations, but certainly a media platform can have whatever opinion it wants in a free society. The question for us today, as a Committee, is whether or not the taxpayer should be forced to pay for this kind of thing.

Mr. Gonzalez, I wanted to get your take on this about why the corporate public broadcasting, is it still relevant today? I mean, we are in a different context than we were in the 1960s where maybe

not every home had a television. Now many of them have multiple televisions, and certainly, most have a screen in their pocket most times during the day. I have three here on my desk, and so it seems like we are in a different context of where could we possibly get the news today or information. Could you speak to the importance, or lack thereof, of the Corporation of Public Broadcasting in the context of where we are today in society?

Mr. GONZALEZ. Yes, right. When it came on after the passage of the '67 Public Broadcasting Act in the early 1970s, there were only three networks. We had Cronkite, Reasoner, and the other guy, and PBS added, by third, the number of networks that we had. That is not the case today and as far as education, which has been diminished. And by the way, I believe that "Sesame Street" was sold to HBO 10 years ago, but as far as the educational value, we have an unending stream of educational content online.

I could reel off a number of websites that people can access, YouTube channels, where kids of all income levels can access educational content. But basically, as I said in my testimony, it goes back to the basic unfairness that conservatives for 50 years have been saying, but you are completely biased, and they have the audacity to say, oh no, we are not, and you have to just pay us, and that is the basic—

Ms. GREENE. The gentleman's time has expired. Thank you, Mr. Gonzalez.

I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record an article published today by Uri Berliner about NPR basically saying that the bias has not changed.

Mr. LYNCH. Madam Chair, I also have a unanimous consent request from the Members who were at Mr. Grijalva's funeral mass this morning asking to submit into the record this letter of support for Federal funding from WKMS, which is Kentucky Radio, where Mr. Comer rode his tractor.

Ms. GREENE. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you.

Ms. GREENE. I now recognize the gentleman, Mr. Casar, from Texas, for 5 minutes.

Mr. CASAR. Good morning. Mr. Gonzalez, you wrote the proposal to defund NPR, PBS, and public broadcasting for Project 2025. Can you answer a few questions for me? How many millions of dollars a month do taxpayers spend for Daniel Tiger to play golf?

Mr. GONZALEZ. I have no idea who he is.

Mr. CASAR. I think the answer is none.

Mr. GONZALEZ. OK.

Mr. CASAR. To your knowledge, has Ms. Piggy ever been caught trying to funnel billions of dollars in government contracts to herself and to her companies?

Mr. GONZALEZ. That is a silly question.

Mr. CASAR. Well, the answer is no. How about Arthur the Aardvark? Has he ever fired independent government watchdogs who are investigating his companies? The answer is no. Madam Chair, I am told we are here to talk about government efficiency, but Daniel Tiger has not blown \$10 million of taxpayer money to play golf with his friends, but Donald Trump has just at the beginning of his Administration. Ms. Piggy has not been caught funneling billions



of dollars in government contracts to herself, but Elon Musk has; and Arthur has not fired independent government watchdogs investigating him and his companies, but Elon Musk has fired at least five.

So, once again, my Republican colleagues are dragging in a scapegoat, this time PBS and NPR, to try to distract from the fact that Trump and Musk are robbing working people. It is “Sesame Street” that is making things expensive. It is Mr. Rogers that is blowing taxpayer money. It is listeners like you. It is absurd. The total funding for public broadcasting is just one-sixth the amount that Elon Musk’s companies make off of the government every single year, but you will not see Elon Musk being grilled by this Committee. I have seen a lot, but pointing the finger at Elmo to cover for Elon Musk might be a new low for Ms. Marjorie Taylor Greene’s Committee. I do not think Americans are buying it.

Here is what I think we should be having a hearing about. After Trump and Musk took over the government, reporters noticed the State Department was trying to funnel \$400 million taxpayer to Tesla. The State Department said it is an old contract, no news here, but because of a brave whistleblower and an NPR reporter, they exposed the corruption and the lies. Madam Chairwoman, if we want to look into waste, fraud, and abuse, why not look into that? Elon Musk, who is running cabinet meetings, who is running the White House, was trying to funnel money to himself, so let us stop investigating Cookie Monster and start investigating how the Trump Administration lied about this and was trying to funnel money to their biggest political supporter.

Maybe you are trying to defund NPR because they expose this kind of corruption. And if Republicans were serious about investigating waste, fraud, and abuse, my colleagues would admit that Big Bird is not the problem. Big Tech is. Big Pharma is. Big insurance companies are. Elon Musk’s companies make billions—\$3 billion a year—off of government contracts. That is six times the money that goes to all of public broadcasting. Private insurers and Medicare Advantage overcharged taxpayers \$83 billion just last year. That could pay for public broadcasting 160 times over. The \$4-and-a-half trillion tax cut for the ultra-wealthy that Republicans on this Committee are trying to push through, that would pay for public broadcasting 9,000 times over.

There is money to pay not just for PBS and NPR, but healthcare for every American, tuition-free trade school and community college for every American, to end homelessness on the streets of our cities, but my Republican colleagues do not want to talk about the corporate waste, fraud, and abuse because those corporations fund the Republicans campaigns. So, instead, they want to shut down educational programming for kids and their families, and they want to shut down local radio stations. To borrow a phrase from “Sesame Street”, the letter of the day is C and it stands for “corruption.”

Look, in my home city of Austin, Texas, we have Austin City Limits, which decade after decade after decade has chronicled American music. And if they had a bad season and it was private TV, they just would have shut it down, and we would not have had decade after decade after decade of Austin City Limits. That is the

amazing thing about public broadcasting. I have a lot of public housing residents in the San Antonio side of my district, and when I talk to them and they hear about what is going on in Washington, DC, they talk about Texas Public Radio.

And I just heard my colleagues talking about educational programming for kids on *YouTube*. That stuff is loaded with ads, and also, on other forms of private television, they are selling you and your kids stuff, making people feel bad. They are trying to make a profit off of you. That is why I sat in front of Mr. Rogers because you got to learn something and were not just trying to sell you junk. It is better for our kids, it is better for our families, and we should actually be supporting public broadcasting instead of this stuff.

Madam Chair, leave Elmo alone. Bring Elon in for questioning instead.

Ms. GREENE. I now recognize Mr. Timmons from South Carolina for 5 minutes.

Mr. TIMMONS. Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to thank the witnesses for being here today. I am going to begin by saying this. We do not want to shut down NPR, PBS, but we have \$36 trillion in debt and we have run a \$1.8 trillion annual deficit, and we are scouring all government spending, not just Democrat priorities, but Republican priorities, too. We are going to be going through the defense budget. We are going to be making sure that we are spending our taxpayer dollars wisely because we have an existential threat. We have an existential threat. We cannot continue down this path financially.

So, we do not want to shut you down, but we cannot continue down this path. And so, if our debt is part of the reason we are here, I think another part of the reason we are here, reevaluating your role and the government's use of taxpayer dollars to partially fund your institutions, is because technology has changed everything. We are not living in 1967, and the internet has changed our society. We have such increased social interconnectedness, and there are various options for people to get news and to get disinformation or information, whatever you want to get. So, those are the two kind of reasons I want to start with, and that is probably half the problem we are here for.

The other half is your perceived bias and your content moderation and the manner in which you are violating journalistic integrity, and I will say this. NPR, you have been far worse at this. Ms. Kerger, you have done a much better job at this, but we still have some issues we are going to talk about. Ms. Maher, do you think that the public statements you have made on social media create a challenge in your leadership for what should be an unbiased public information system? Did your past comments—I will give you a better question. Did they come up in your job interview? Like, do you see a problem?

Ms. MAHER. Congressman, thank you for the question. No, they never came up in my job interview.

Mr. TIMMONS. You are a rabid progressive. And do you not think it is a problem that your political leanings make it seem to the American people that you are not biased and you are not doing

your job because you agree that your job is to have journalistic integrity, right?

Ms. MAHER. Absolutely, but there is a strong firewall between the newsroom and anything that I do.

Mr. TIMMONS. Let us talk about the newsroom. You have 87 registered Democrats, not a single Republican in your editor boards. I mean, how does that work to give us the perception that you are doing your job of actually delivering unbiased information?

Ms. MAHER. Well, I would agree with you that that number is a concern if it is accurate. I do believe that we need to have journalists who represent the full breadth of the American society so that we can report well for all Americans.

Mr. TIMMONS. Well, I think that you are failing. I realize you have only been there for a year, but I just really think that while it is a small portion of your budget, you very much should expect to restructure your revenue streams because I do not think that NPR is necessarily worth saving, and I am going to go on to Ms. Kerger. I will say this, you have been very professional and you have been there for decades, and I think that you have done a fairly good job over your tenure, but I want to ask you a very simple question. In retrospect, do you think that it was inappropriate to put the drag queen on the kids' show? Do you think that was a mistake?

Ms. KERGER. The drag queen was actually not on any of our kids' shows. The image that Chairman Taylor Greene showed was from a project that our New York City station did with the New York City Department of Education.

Mr. TIMMONS. What time of day did it air?

Ms. KERGER. It did not air. It was a digital project they did for the Department of Education. It only appeared on our website briefly.

Mr. TIMMONS. Do you think that that image had anything to do with PBS? Do you see—

Ms. KERGER. It was not for PBS. It was mistakenly put on our website by our—I am sorry, I do not mean to talk over you. It was mistakenly put on our website by our New York City station. It was not intended for national distribution. It was immediately pulled down. It was never broadcast.

Mr. TIMMONS. OK. But do you think that you should publish something that calls trees racist? In retrospect, should you have published that?

Ms. KERGER. I am not sure what you are referring to, Congressman.

Mr. TIMMONS. You had a segment that was called "Racist Trees". I mean, we have already referenced it a number of times, so I mean, do you think trees can be racist? I guess that is a good one.

Ms. KERGER. I do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. TIMMONS. OK.

Ms. KERGER. I have never heard of what you are referring to—

Mr. TIMMONS. All right. Well, we—

Ms. KERGER [continuing]. But I would be happy to look into it.

Mr. TIMMONS. I guess, last, do you think that it is appropriate to expose children to issues of transitioning? Do you see a problem with that? Is that something you should avoid?

Ms. KERGER. That is not anything on any of our children's programs at all.

Mr. TIMMONS. Ms. Kerger, you have done a far better job here today, and we are going to continue to have this conversation. But again, we have \$36 trillion in debt, and we are trying to figure out how to make sure that our kids and our grandkids have an opportunity at the American Dream because if we do not change course financially, they will not. Thank you. I yield back.

Ms. KERGER. Thank you.

Ms. GREENE. I now recognize the gentlewoman from Texas, Ms. Crockett, for 5 minutes.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you so much. It should not be surprising that the President is doing everything possible to make it more difficult for the media to hold him accountable and for the public to be informed about his reckless and illegal behavior, yet here we are. The Republicans have actually organized this goofy hearing to try to convince the American people that PBS and NPR are "domestic threats" not the incompetent, unqualified Secretary of Defense who is texting war plans to journalists. But it is you all, PBS and NPR, the American people are supposed to be worried about.

You cannot make this up. It is as stupid as it sounds. The American people should be worried about the President threatening to investigate NBC for treason for reporting on his felony convictions, or arresting reporters and stripping networks of their licenses for not saying nice things about him or not using "Gulf of America." The Republican's witness, Mr. Gonzalez, went so far as to suggest that because NPR and PBS reported on the murder of George Floyd, they "represent a danger to our physical health as well as the civic health of our body politics." Ms. Maher, do you think reporting on the murder of George Floyd and highlighting instances of systemic racism is a domestic threat to America?

Ms. MAHER. Thank you, Congresswoman. I believe it is our responsibility to report on all issues of interest to the American public.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you so much. Ms. Kerger, what about you?

Ms. KERGER. I agree. I think it is important for us to report on the important news of the day.

Ms. CROCKETT. So, let us talk about the critical role of public media. During his first term, President Trump's own Department of Homeland Security highlighted the importance of Public Broadcasting's role in public safety. In 2018, his Administration stated, "PBS and local public television stations play a crucial role in protecting communities by delivering essential information to individuals and first responders. These benefits are all made possible by Public Broadcasting stations' unique reach, reliability, and role across America, and are especially vital in rural and underserved areas."

Madam Chairwoman, I seek unanimous consent to enter into the record the 2018 report.

Ms. GREENE. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. CROCKETT. And Madam Chair, I also seek unanimous consent to enter into the record, the 2019 report titled, "Modernizing the Nation's Public Alert and Warning System" from Trump's—

Ms. GREENE. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. CROCKETT. In the report, FEMA encouraged “the use of Public Broadcast capabilities to expand alert warning and communication capabilities to fill gaps in rural and underserved areas.” Mr. Uрман, what is a more significant domestic threat, reporting the murder of George Floyd or dismantling most of America’s emergency communication systems?

Mr. ULMAN. Can you please repeat the question for me, Congresswoman?

Ms. CROCKETT. Which one is more of a threat, reporting the murder of George Floyd or dismantling most of America’s emergency communication systems?

Mr. ULMAN. Dismantling the emergency systems.

Ms. CROCKETT. And isn’t it true that KBRW-AM in Barrow, Alaska, is the only broadcast service available in an area of more than 90,000 square miles?

Mr. ULMAN. That is correct. It is also the North Slope where the majority of all the oil production that comes from Alaska takes place.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you so much. And isn’t it true that without these stations’ broadcast, Americans in rural communities would lack access to lifesaving information and public safety alerts?

Mr. ULMAN. That is correct.

Ms. CROCKETT. So, in your opinion, would eliminating funding for stations in rural America, like WNGH Channel 18, in the Chairwoman’s district, hurt Americans?

Mr. ULMAN. It would hurt Americans, yes.

Ms. CROCKETT. In fact, Georgia Public Broadcasting serves as the official distributor of evacuation route information during state-ordered evacuations, and the chairwoman is here advocating to strip their funding.

Look, the DOGE agenda is not about government efficiency. It is about breeding corruption at the expense of the safety of the American people, particularly Americans living in rural or remote parts of the country. They do not care about public safety, they do not care about emergency management, and they do not care about free speech, all of which are harming American people. In fact, I am going to skip off real quick because they have tried to come for you, Ms. Maher, and I just want to clarify, you did not work for NPR when those statements were made, did you?

Ms. MAHER. That is correct.

Ms. CROCKETT. And to be clear, free speech is not about whatever it is that you all want somebody to say, and the idea that you want to shut down everybody that is not Fox News is bullshit. We need to stop playing because that is what you all are doing in here. You do not want to hear the opinions of anybody else, and the Constitution says Congress shall make no law respecting or establishing of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof or abridging the free speech or press.

Ms. GREENE. The gentlewoman’s time has expired. The gentleman’s time has expired.

Mr. GARCIA. Madam Chairwoman, can I put something into the record? Unanimous consent, please.

Ms. GREENE. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you. I would like to put in this NPR article, “What Biden’s Preemptive Pardons for Family Members Could Mean for Presidential Powers,” if I could submit that to the record?

Ms. GREENE. Without objection, so ordered.

I now recognize the gentleman from Ohio, Jim Jordan, for 5 minutes.

Mr. JORDAN. Thank you, Madam Chair. Ms. Maher, who is Uri Berliner?

Ms. MAHER. Mr. Berliner is a former senior editor.

Mr. JORDAN. That is all?

Ms. MAHER. A former senior business editor for NPR.

Mr. JORDAN. How long did he work at NPR?

Ms. MAHER. I believe he was there just over 25 years.

Mr. JORDAN. Twenty-five years. Award-winning journalist? Did he win any awards?

Ms. MAHER. Our time did not apply.

Mr. JORDAN. Peabody Award. That is pretty important, isn’t it?

Ms. MAHER. That is, absolutely.

Mr. JORDAN. A pretty distinguished journalist, right?

Ms. MAHER. Certainly.

Mr. JORDAN. He wrote a long story about what you do at NPR. Is NPR biased?

Ms. MAHER. Congressman, I have never seen any instance of—

Mr. JORDAN. Never?

Ms. MAHER [continuing]. Political bias determining editorial decisions, no.

Mr. JORDAN. Well, Mr. Berliner, in his story last year, wrote, in the D.C. area, editorial positions at NPR, he said he found 87 registered Democrats, zero Republicans. Is that accurate?

Ms. MAHER. We do not track the numbers or the voter registration, but I find that concerning.

Mr. JORDAN. Award-winning journalist who worked 25 years at NPR, Mr. Berliner, was he lying when he wrote that?

Ms. MAHER. I am not presuming such. We do not track that information about our journalists.

Mr. JORDAN. Eighty-seven to zero, and you are not biased?

Ms. MAHER. I think that is concerning, if those numbers are accurate.

Mr. JORDAN. It is concerning. I mean, it was not 44–43, it was not 60–27, it was not 70–17, it was not even 80 to 7. It was 87 Democrats, zero Republicans, and you say NPR is not biased. How about the big stories over the last few years? According to Mr. Berliner again, on the Trump-Russia story, he wrote, “At NPR, we hitched our wagon to Trump’s most visible antagonist, Representative Adam Schiff,” and he said they interviewed him 25 times. Is that accurate?

Ms. MAHER. I was not there at the time, but those numbers sound accurate.

Mr. JORDAN. Those sound accurate, but then he said when the Mueller report came out and Robert Mueller said he found no evidence of collusion, he said “Russiagate faded from our programming.” Is that accurate?

Ms. MAHER. Again, I was not there at the time. I could not say.

Mr. JORDAN. You could not say?

Ms. MAHER. I was not at NPR at the time.

Mr. JORDAN. You did not prepare for that? You knew we were going to ask you about this guy, didn't you? It has come up, like, 6,000 times already in the hearing.

Ms. MAHER. I just could not say whether it faded from our coverage, sir.

Mr. JORDAN. How about this story? October 2020, the *New York Post* had the Hunter Biden laptop story, and one of those editors, I guess one of those 87 Democrat editors, said this: "We do not want to waste our time on stories that are not really stories. We do not want to waste the listeners' and readers' times on stories that are just pure distractions." Was that a pure distraction story?

Ms. MAHER. Our current editorial leadership believes that that was a mistake, as do I.

Mr. JORDAN. Yes. The whole country knows that was a mistake, definitely impacted the election. I think it certainly impacted the election. How about the COVID origin story? That is a pretty big story too, right? Mr. Berliner said, "We became fervent members of the term, 'natural origin,' even declaring that the lab leak was debunked by scientists." Turns out though, the lab leak is what most people think actually caused the COVID virus.

Ms. MAHER. Sorry, sir. Is there a question there?

Mr. JORDAN. There is. You guys were zero for three. On the three of the biggest stories in the last 5 years, you guys were zero for three, and yet you maintain that NPR is not biased?

Ms. MAHER. Congressman, I do not believe we are politically biased, no. We are a nonpartisan organization.

Mr. JORDAN. Nonpartisan organization. What has happened to your listeners over the last 5 years? Went up, down, or stayed the same?

Ms. MAHER. It has gone up and down, and is now going back up.

Mr. JORDAN. Well, I thought 5 years ago it was at 60 million. You said in your opening statement, I think, 43 million.

Ms. MAHER. That is correct.

Mr. JORDAN. So, 43 million now, and it was at 60 million 5 years ago. I can do some math. That looks like it went down.

Ms. MAHER. And is now going back up.

Mr. JORDAN. It is now going back up?

Ms. MAHER. Yes, it is.

Mr. JORDAN. How much has it went back up?

Ms. MAHER. It has gone up a couple of millions over the past year.

Mr. JORDAN. Oh, so you went from 60 million to 41 million, and now you are back up to 43 million.

Ms. MAHER. In a year's time. I am very proud of that growth, sir.

Mr. JORDAN. OK. You are proud of that growth, OK, but over 5 years, it went down 18 million?

Ms. MAHER. That is correct, sir.

Mr. JORDAN. OK. Should taxpayers subsidize NPR?

Ms. MAHER. I believe that taxpayers should subsidize local stations, sir. That is the vast majority of what we are talking about.

Mr. JORDAN. I thought you said you got \$11 million from Corporation of Public Broadcasting, which is taxpayer funding directly to you, right?

Ms. MAHER. That is to support the public radio and satellite system.

Mr. JORDAN. And then local stations get it from the Corporation of Public Broadcasting, right? They get taxpayer money?

Ms. MAHER. A hundred million that goes to the local stations.

Mr. JORDAN. A hundred million goes to local stations, and then those local stations buy back programming content from you. So, that money goes to the local stations, comes back to you, gets routed through the local stations, all taxpayer money.

Ms. MAHER. Those fees are actually based on private donations rather than on Federal funding.

Mr. JORDAN. Well, we all know money is fungible, so some of it gets put in there.

Ms. MAHER. Certainly. We could agree that money is fungible.

Mr. JORDAN. More money for less listeners. You fired the guy who pointed all this out, who said that you were so biased to the left that you lost listeners, which is exactly happening, and you are here maintaining that, oh, you need to continue to get taxpayer money.

Ms. MAHER. I did not fire Mr. Berliner, sir.

Mr. JORDAN. OK. The guy that left after all that. I understand, I understand. Are you fundraising off today's hearing?

Ms. MAHER. Sir, I believe that there was a message that went out earlier today letting people know we were coming in, yes.

Mr. JORDAN. Yes, and at the bottom of the message, it said, "donate now," right?

Ms. MAHER. I do not recall the exact language.

Mr. JORDAN. I can show it to you. Right there, it is, "Donate now." I mean, I am not against fundraising. We all do it. I mean, I get it, but I assume this fundraising thing is probably going to all the left listeners who were subsidized content by the taxpayers and that is the problem. That is the rub. I yield back.

Ms. GREENE. The gentleman's time has expired. I now recognize Ms. Randall from Washington for 5 minutes.

Ms. RANDALL. Thank you so much. You know, I am new to Congress, this is my first term, and I came from a legislative body that did not have quite as heated debates in our committees and were generally fairly welcoming to our folks joining us to testify. So, I want to say thank you to all of you for taking the time out of your schedule to come and share your experience with all of us and with the American people. I am grateful for your time and for the work that you do in service of your communities and neighbors.

You know, American families used to get all the same news, right? Folks would have access to a handful of news channels, they would watch the same nightly news programs, they would go from one to the other to the other, and we could all agree on what was happening in our country. We all used to operate from the same baseline of information, but today, it is no secret that we are operating in a much more diversified and fractured media environment. The content space, the use of AI-generated content, Americans now have to be able to discern for themselves whether something they are hearing is true or not. But investing in public media is a bedrock to our healthy, critically informed and engaged public, and our democracy.



And I know that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have argued over whether every piece of programming is in service of the public, but I also want to point out that in my fairly rural district, we have a lot of areas that are not served by broadband. A lot of folks who cannot easily access numerous podcasts while they are out working on their property, they have to maybe wait for something to download when they are at home, using maybe even a wired internet connection, right? I am in a dead zone for about an hour-and-a-half as I am driving from one city to another in my community, but public radio is broadly accessible, and it is important for folks counting on the weather report, for kids who are in pre-kindergarten who are watching Elmo and learning to count and do math. It is important for the young people who were home during COVID and were able to continue learning with the help of public broadcasting.

I think we have a lot of problems in this country, a lot of problems that we should be tackling for regular Americans who are struggling to afford to live, to afford housing, to afford health care, to be able to live the lives that they dream of for themselves and their children. I think we have got some national security concerns that have been talked about a lot in this Committee. But I think talking about defunding public broadcasting and public media is an egregious misuse of our time here.

Mr. Ulman, when we talk about cutting funds for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, we are talking about those local small stations that rely on that money. Seventy percent of Corporation for Public Broadcasting funding goes directly to public radio. I know you have worked in Tacoma in the past. I can attest to how rural some parts of Western Washington are. It is not all Tacoma. What role do public media stations, like NPR and PBS, play in supporting local stations? What kind of programming do they provide?

Mr. ULMAN. The local communities are at the heart of the work we do. As I shared in my opening remarks, we talk about the people and the places there. You bring up a memory of mine. Chehalis, Aberdeen, Hoquiam area, KBTC was the only public television station there. You know about the struggles that that community was having over a decade ago, job loss, all kinds of terrible economic situations. We provided educational services there with a half-a-million-dollar local grant that we partnered with the community on. It was incredible work. We do the same thing in Alaska with military families, homeschoolers, elementary schools. Those are the pieces we provide, and then local news stories that people can use about where they live and what they do. That is what we do. That would be lost.

Ms. RANDALL. Thank you so much. Madam Chair, I yield back.

Ms. GREENE. Thank you. I now recognize the gentleman from Tennessee, Mr. Burchett, for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURCHETT. Thank you, Chairlady. Ms. Kerger, is it true that HBO bought the rights to "Sesame Street"?

Ms. KERGER. No, it did not. Sesame Street entered an arrangement with HBO for a number of years, which is now——

Mr. BURCHETT. And it was a paid arrangement, correct?

Ms. KERGER. Yes, which allowed us to get the series for free during the period of that time.

Mr. BURCHETT. How much money was transacted during that time?

Ms. KERGER. I do not know. Sesame Street is a private organization. It is separate from ours.

Mr. BURCHETT. OK. Ms. Maher, what about Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the USA" is propaganda?

Ms. MAHER. I am sorry, sir. Could you repeat the question?

Mr. BURCHETT. What about Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the USA" is propaganda?

Ms. MAHER. I do not believe that is propaganda, sir.

Mr. BURCHETT. OK. Well, in January, North County Public Radio, and that is a subsidiary of NPR, had Daphne Brooks, who apparently is a Black feminism scholar, on its show, where it was hosted by the host Brittany Luz, and it says, "Have you ever watched something on TV and thought OK, now this is propaganda? Have you ever had that moment?" To which Daphne Brooks replied, "Whenever I see Lee Greenwood singing 'Proud to be an American'."

Ms. MAHER. I believe that represents the individual we interviewed on air, not the position at NPR.

Mr. BURCHETT. And did you say there is no bias on NPR?

Ms. MAHER. That is not a position of NPR.

Mr. BURCHETT. That is not a bias statement, ma'am? Both parties wrap themselves around this song every time there is a national conflict. Lee Greenwood sings it and he does a beautiful job, but you say there is no bias in NPR.

Ms. MAHER. That is that individual's opinion, and she, of course, is entitled to it, but that is not the position of NPR.

Mr. BURCHETT. Ma'am, you said in your opening statement that you were going to be transformative and I believe you failed to do that. Let me ask you, why did you call President Trump a fascist and a deranged racist sociopath in 2020?

Ms. MAHER. Congressman, I appreciate the opportunity to address this. I regret those tweets. I would not tweet them again today. They represented a time where I was reflecting on something that, I believe, that the President had said rather than who he is. I do not presume that anyone is a racist.

Mr. BURCHETT. You do not believe anyone is a racist?

Ms. MAHER. I do not start by presuming anyone is a racist, sir.

Mr. BURCHETT. OK. Has NPR or PBS ever conducted an internal review to assess whether conservative or right-leaning perspectives are fairly representative news in programming?

Ms. MAHER. Congressman, what we look at is the distribution of people who listen to our work, and we can tell you, and I am proud to tell you, that for our digital, our podcasts, and our website, the distribution of Americans who come to NPR does reflect the political distribution of the Nation. In fact, the distribution on our website, 33 percent of folks who come are conservative versus 28 percent who are liberal, and the rest identify as independent. So, the largest group is conservatives who come to NPR's websites.

Mr. BURCHETT. So, you believe that most Americans think President Trump is a fascist and a deranged racist sociopath?

Ms. MAHER. I do not believe that at all, sir.

Mr. BURCHETT. OK. Ma'am?

Ms. KERGER. We, obviously, are constantly looking at the voices that we bring forward. We take to heart our commitment to bringing forward perspectives from across the country. Our programming comes from our local stations. And I mentioned in my opening comment the series that we did out of Arkansas, "Southern Storytellers", that is just one little example. Ten percent of our schedule is news. The rest of it is either children's programming or programming based on history to give us all a collective expression. And we are constantly looking to making sure that we are bringing forward a diversity of viewpoints and perspectives and experiences that really do make up the fabric of this country.

Mr. BURCHETT. OK. NPR's Senior Editor, Leonard, has been mentioned before, but he has quoted as saying, "An open-minded spirit no longer exists within NPR, and now, predictably, we do not have an audience that reflects America," yet you stated that the audience does reflect America. He was suspended without pay for 5 days for saying this, and, of course, he eventually resigned in April 2024. You have also stated that Federal funding is essential for NPR to operate, but also claim only 1 percent of your funding comes from the Federal Government. Which is it?

Ms. MAHER. Mr. Berliner was suspended for the outside work policy, not for what he said, sir. In terms of Federal funding, the Federal funds go to support our operation of the public radio satellite system, which enables all of our local stations to be able to communicate information and broadcast, including—

Mr. BURCHETT. As I stated earlier, ma'am, funding is very fungible. It flows wherever it needs to. I do not buy that argument.

Ms. MAHER. We do have a separate policy, sir.

Mr. BURCHETT. I wonder if any of the members of the committee would comment real quickly. Would you agree that Real America's Voice, Newsmax, Fox, or NewsNation, if they were to see Federal funds, would you all support that? Yes or no. Mr. Ulman, yes or no?

Mr. ULMAN. I would have to get back to you on that.

Mr. BURCHETT. Ma'am?

Ms. KERGER. I actually do not have an opinion about that.

Mr. BURCHETT. Ma'am?

Ms. MAHER. I do not have an opinion about that, sir. Sir, that would be Congress' decision.

Mr. BURCHETT. Thank you, Chairlady.

Ms. GREENE. Thank you. I now yield to the gentleman from California, Mr. Khanna, for 5 minutes.

Mr. KHANNA. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for allowing me to waive on to the Committee. Mr. Gonzalez, I read with interest your testimony. It was so angry, so I thought I would try to lighten things up a little bit. Who are three of your favorite characters on "Daniel Tiger" or what episodes are your favorites?

Mr. GONZALEZ. Representative Khanna, thank you very much for the opportunity to lighten up. Again, I think I am taking a time machine here. "Sesame Street" went to HBO—

Mr. KHANNA. Daniel Tiger, do you have some favorite characters, O the owl? Any of them?

Mr. GONZALEZ. No, none.

Mr. KHANNA. What does "ugga mugga" mean to you?

Mr. GONZALEZ. Nothing.

Mr. KHANNA. You have never heard the expression, “ugga mugga?”

Mr. GONZALEZ. I do not think so, no.

Mr. KHANNA. It is affection. Have you ever watched a “Daniel Tiger” show or know any families who watch a “Daniel Tiger” show?

Mr. GONZALEZ. I do not think so, no.

Mr. KHANNA. You have never watched one?

Mr. GONZALEZ. I have never seen “Daniel Tiger”. Sorry, I—

Mr. KHANNA. Do you know what “Daniel Tiger” is a successor to?

Mr. GONZALEZ. I do not know “Daniel Tiger”, so I do not know what he is a successor to.

Mr. KHANNA. No, the show. What it is a successor to? Do you know?

Mr. GONZALEZ. No.

Mr. KHANNA. You really do not know, honestly?

Mr. GONZALEZ. No, I really do not.

Mr. KHANNA. It is all over history. It is a successor to “Mr. Rogers.”

Mr. GONZALEZ. Oh, there you go. OK. Mr. Rogers I know.

Mr. KHANNA. OK. Are you familiar with his 1969 testimony?

Mr. GONZALEZ. I am.

Mr. KHANNA. I want to quote because it is one of my favorites. I studied this actually going to school. It is some of the most effective testimony in Congress. He said, “I give an expression of care every day to each child to help him realize that he is unique. I end the program by saying you have made this day a special day by just your being you. There is no person in the whole world like you, and I like you just the way you are.” Senator Pastore, who was a hard-headed fiscal conservative, said he got goosebumps by that testimony and it is what convinced him to fund the public broadcast. You have said you would not have funded it. Do you think Senator Pastore made a mistake back then?

Mr. GONZALEZ. Oh, yes, absolutely. I think I agree with Fred Friendly, who testified and said—

Mr. KHANNA. You would have voted against—

Mr. GONZALEZ. I would have voted, yes, I do not think that you should have state broadcasters.

Mr. KHANNA. Now, what is the cost of public broadcasting as a percent of the Federal budget?

Mr. GONZALEZ. I do not know, but it is a—

Mr. KHANNA. Come on. You are talking about the \$36 trillion of debt that we have. You are saying this is a really important thing that we need to cut. You did not read about what percent it is?

Mr. GONZALEZ. It is important in principle, and it is—

Mr. KHANNA. The principle is a different thing. You are saying this is an effective strategy to cut debt, and you have no idea what percent?

Mr. GONZALEZ. It was 5 percent of the discretionary cuts in the GOP—

Mr. KHANNA. It is .01 percent.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Right, but it was 5 percent of the discretionary cuts in the 2017 budget.

Mr. KHANNA. Point-one percent of the Federal budget. That is one of the reasons Senator Pastore said, you know, it is worth it in an investment in American kids. Now, you said Sesame Street is a private organization or Sesame Street is going private. I did not understand that because Sesame Workshop is a nonprofit. What did you mean by private?

Mr. GONZALEZ. Well, I mean, it is a nonprofit. It is separate from—

Mr. KHANNA. OK. But it gets public funding. Were you talking about the HBO thing?

Mr. GONZALEZ. Yes.

Mr. KHANNA. Do you realize that HBO just canceled with them and—

Mr. GONZALEZ. I do, yes.

Mr. KHANNA. And the reason they canceled them, and I am trying to explain why Senator Pastore funded this, and if you talk to families who watch “Daniel Tiger”, maybe you would appreciate it. The reason they canceled it is because it was not making a profit because when you try to do “Daniel Tiger” or “Sesame Street”, and you try to do what Mr. Rogers was talking about, helping the emotional and social development of kids, it is not easy. You got to hire people who are child psychologists. You have to hire people who are educationalists. A lot goes into this, and HBO said, you know what? It is not making money. We would rather put on things that are geared toward adults or that are going to be conflicts. We are not making money on this.

And the whole reason Senator Pastore said that we are going to fund this, I know you kind of mocked in your testimony the kids, but the whole reason was that when you make programming for children to help their social and emotional development, it costs so much money to do, and it is a public good, then not everything has to be about profit. Do you have any idea what it takes to produce “Daniel Tiger”, who all they hired? Did you ever try to figure it out?

Mr. GONZALEZ. No, but I can tell you that the market said that there was not enough demand for it and that is the reason why HBO got rid of it.

Mr. KHANNA. Right.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Because there was not enough demand.

Mr. KHANNA. Yes. That is exactly the right point. Are you saying that everything in American society needs to be driven by the profit motive? There is not enough demand on getting ratings for things that help the social and economic development of kids, but you know what Mr. Rogers understood, what we have forgotten in this country? Some things are more valuable than money. At a time where a country is polarized, I wish we had a little more empathy and caring, and that is not a partisan issue. That is an American issue, and I would recommend you rewatch that testimony from Mr. Rogers. I hope the whole country would watch it.

Mr. GONZALEZ. I have watched it, and we are \$36 trillion in debt.

Ms. GREENE. I now recognize the gentleman from Missouri, Mr. Burlison, for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURLISON. Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, I think that it is important to bring this conversation into the context that

needs to be said, which is that we are \$36 trillion in debt as a Nation. We are spending 20 percent of every dollar that comes in from taxpayers just to cover the interest, and guess what? American people, bad news, interest rates are going up, so that 20 percent is going to get worse and worse.

We had Ray Dalio come in and tell Congress that we are entering potentially dark territory. There are a number of red flags. We are at the worst level of debt than we were after we left the World War II, OK? We are at that level of debt, and we did not just fight a war. We were facing potential wars and conflicts. We are at that level of debt and we did not just emerge from a recession or depression. If that happens today, you will see the dollar no longer be the world reserve currency, and we will be in serious trouble, and so that is the context that we are in. Look, if there was all the money in the world, it is fine to throw money around, but we do not have all the money in the world, and the question that we have at hand today is, is it appropriate to spend taxpayer dollars on things that may not be necessary anymore?

And so, my question, Mr. Gonzalez, at one point in time, there was state-sponsored speech directly. It was the form of town criers, correct? So, government used to fund people to go out in the street and deliver the news of the day vocally at street corners, correct?

Mr. GONZALEZ. Yes.

Mr. BURLISON. OK. Why don't we do that today?

Mr. GONZALEZ. Well, I think it is because we would have better ways of delivering the news.

Mr. BURLISON. I mean, I think you get my point. Like, today, at one point in time, there was very limited access to news and there was an appropriate time where potentially, we needed to have state-sponsored news, but do we need that today?

Mr. GONZALEZ. No, we do not, and may I quote Thomas Jefferson on this very point, since you bring this up? He said, "To compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves and abhors is sinful and tyrannical." This is what I base my opposition to public funding for media.

Mr. BURLISON. Yes, and that is why I think that given this context, like, let us be real. It was said that we are attacking free speech. This is state-sponsored speech. And the very reason why we have, you know, these witnesses before us today is not because they are totally being funded or completely being funded. We are not bringing in Disney Channel in here, right? We are not bringing in National Geographic, right, for their content. The reason why we are having this conversation is because we are funding you, and because we are funding you, the taxpayers get to have an opportunity to ask why are we funding some of this content that they might disagree with, right?

Mr. GONZALEZ. Yes. No, that is completely right. In fact, I think that PBS and NPR, but especially PBS, will thrive on the membership model. They keep saying it is such a small percentage, well, if it is—the public funding—if it is such a small percentage, then no problem.

Mr. BURLISON. Yes. So, Ms. Maher, I am going to ask a very difficult question, but if you are in my shoes and you have to face the

fact, can we fund Social Security or do we spend money on NPR, which would you choose?

Ms. MAHER. Congressman, I would argue that in one of the—

Mr. BURLISON. Which, if you had to pick, if you were forced to make a decision, there was not enough money to go around, Social Security or NPR?

Ms. MAHER. We know how important public media is to our Nation's seniors, sir.

Mr. BURLISON. More important than Social Security? I think American people would disagree.

Ms. MAHER. I think that—

Mr. BURLISON. Ms. Kerger, let me ask this. Would it be more appropriate to fund PBS or to fund veterans' healthcare? If given limited resources, which is where we are at?

Ms. KERGER. I recognize the limited resources, and I feel that both are important for this country.

Mr. BURLISON. I think what the American people want to know is when they are sending money, their taxpayer dollars, and they are funding things like Independent Lens, and look, I like some of the content on your stations. I love NOVA, but you know what? NOVA competes with National Geographic in nature. Why are we funding something that competes with these private sector industries? I like "Sesame Street", but I also know that it is competing directly with "Handy Manny", "Doc McStuffins", and "Little Einsteins", right? Those exist, and we are not funding them. They are not here having to defend their content. But because we are funding it, I am going to ask you, why are we funding in episodes of Independent Lens about episode called "Real Boy: A Trans Teen Navigates Adolescence, Sobriety, and Physical and Emotional Ramifications?" That is what the American people want to know. Social Security—

Ms. GREENE. We are out of time, but our witnesses can answer the questions.

Ms. KERGER. Thank you, Madam Chair. That was a documentary that was produced for adults as part of our primetime audience, and it was part of a point of view that we share to try to help people understand the wide breadth of experiences of people across the country.

Mr. BURLISON. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. GREENE. I now recognize the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia, Ms. Norton, for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to thank the witnesses for being here today. I am a strong supporter of public broadcasting, and I am a regular listener and watcher of the public broadcasting stations here in D.C. Public broadcasting is a public good. WETA is D.C.'s local PBS station and is proudly home to the world's longest-running high school quiz show. For over 60 years, the show, "It's Academic", has showcased some of the best and brightest high school students in the Capital Region. President Reagan once praised "It's Academic" as "a reminder of the importance of education," and even Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas made a guest appearance. One area student who competed on the show said, "It has made me a lot smarter," and "getting to say that I have been on a TV show is really cool." "It's Academic"

is just one example of local public media programming that celebrates and lifts up the community. Mr. Ulman, in your experience as head of the Alaska Public Media, why is it important for public media to elevate local voices?

Mr. ULMAN. Thank you so much for that question. There are stories to be told all over this great Nation of ours, and one of the things that I take the utmost pride in is being someone who can provide the strategy and build the resources and build the capacity to ensure that we can capture video about those uniquely Alaskan stories. We can capture audio about those uniquely Alaskan stories, and what we do is we take that opportunity to not only tell those stories for ourselves within our great state, but we also work with our national partners. This local national partnership is essential. Without PBS, without NPR, you would not hear stories, news stories, public affairs stories, community stories from Alaska. You would not see them on the PBS "NewsHour". This is vital. It is vital for Alaskans to know that they are connected to their Nation and that what we do in Alaska matters to our Nation. Thank you, again, for that question.

Ms. NORTON. Ms. Kerger, I would love to hear your bigger future picture take on this. If PBS stations are suddenly taken off the air, what would be lost to communities across the country?

Ms. KERGER. I have spent a good part of my time as the president of PBS traveling and visiting our stations across the country because I feel for me to do my job well, I need to understand what the role of our stations are in communities. That means spending time not just with station management, but also with people in the community. So, I have been to all 50 states, and the reason that we are here and the reason that we are arguing so passionately for funding, recognizing there are very difficult challenges in our country right now, is that many of our smaller and, actually, medium-sized stations would not exist without the Federal appropriation.

And when you look at a station like Cookeville, Tennessee, which serves part of Appalachia, 50 percent of their budget comes from the Federal Government. Those are stations that I have seen that have small staffs that do extraordinary work, and those are the stations that I worry would not survive. This would be an existential moment for them, and that is why I think this is so important.

Ms. NORTON. The D.C. area NPR station similarly provides acclaimed programming, including up-to-the minute news and local shows exploring the D.C. cultural scene and sharing stories from all over the city, including historically marginalized areas. The station also produces award-winning journalism, such as an investigative feature on local families coping with sickle cell disease throughout the country. More and more local news outlets are closing each day at a rate of more than two per week. This has made public radio reporting all the more important. Ms. Maher, why is it beneficial for journalists to live in the communities they cover?

Ms. GREENE. We will let the witness quickly answer, and then we are out of time.

Ms. MAHER. Thank you so much, Madam Chair. We find that enabling public radio to continue to be funded allows for us to meet the needs of people who live in news deserts. And having journalists who are from that community means they can prioritize the



needs of that community, whether it is sickle cell issues in D.C., or whether it is the price of sorghum in our agricultural heartland, whether it is thinking about the wildfires that we see across the center and west of our country, or whether it is the impact of storms across the Gulf and southern parts of our country.

We recognize local journalists. They speak the language. They recognize the pronunciations of the places that they come from. They come from the community. It is tremendous value to enable that we are for America, from Americans, and all American voices are heard.

Ms. GREENE. The gentlelady's time has expired. I now recognize the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Fallon, for 5 minutes.

Mr. FALLON. Thank you, Madam Chair. Ms. Maher, do you believe that the National Public Radio takes a balanced and fair approach to news, politics, culture, et cetera?

Ms. MAHER. Mr. Fallon, thank you for the question. I came into National Public Radio—

Mr. FALLON. And I apologize, it is just that we have such limited time.

Ms. MAHER. Of course.

Mr. FALLON. You believe that to be true?

Ms. MAHER. I believe that we have work to do. We always do in order to improve and serve all Americans.

Mr. FALLON. I think it is more accurate than not that you are either fair or you are unfair. So, what do you think you are?

Ms. MAHER. I believe we wake up every day with a desire to be fair and it is part of why—

Mr. FALLON. I mean, that you are fair? You have a desire to be fair. OK. So, you would not describe NPR as objective and non-partisan?

Ms. MAHER. I would.

Mr. FALLON. You would. OK. Ms. Kerger, same question for you. Would you believe that PBS is fair and objective and nonpartisan?

Ms. KERGER. Yes.

Mr. FALLON. OK. Thank you. Thank you for the quick answer, too. So, I find it interesting that the CPB's recent goal was to promote efforts that ensure fact-based journalism that promotes a symphony of ideological viewpoints. You both agree with that goal?

Ms. MAHER. Yes.

Ms. KERGER. Yes.

Mr. FALLON. All right. Wonderful. So, Ms. Kerger, in 2023, when PBS had a program, "Washington Week", with the *Atlantic*, and when President Biden's mental acuity was questioned, one of the reporters claimed the GOP was lying. Another reporter, Jeffrey Goldberg, who has been in the news of late, described Biden as, "mentally acute." Were you aware if there were any dissenting opinions on that program that day?

Ms. KERGER. I do not know from that day, no.

Mr. FALLON. There were not, but fortunately, and there was a debate, and I believe, June 2024, where the American people in the world found out just who was lying: the Democrats, Jeffrey Goldberg, and PBS. Ms. Maher, I am sure you are aware that Hunter Biden had a laptop.

Ms. MAHER. I am, sir, yes.

Mr. FALLON. OK. And there were many stories written about said laptop?

Ms. MAHER. Yes, sir.

Mr. FALLON. And in 2020, unfortunately, NPR's managing editor for news refused to cover the story, and he branded it a "waste of time, not a real story, and a distraction." And instead, unfortunately, of NPR investigating, they ran a puff piece that led with, "Experts say attack on Hunter Biden addiction deepens stigma for millions." It is unfortunate that NPR ignored the Hunter Biden laptop story, but you all did talk quite a bit about the debunked Russia collusion. Do you know how many times NPR interviewed Adam Schiff about the Russia collusion?

Ms. MAHER. Congressman, I would love to say that we actually believe we made a mistake on the Hunter Biden laptop story.

Mr. FALLON. And I appreciate that. Thank you. How many times did you all interview Adam Schiff about the Russia collusion?

Ms. MAHER. I am sorry, sir. I do not have that number.

Mr. FALLON. It was 25 times. You know how many times NPR interviewed the Chairman of this Committee, Oversight Committee, Jamie Comer, about the Biden impeachment inquiry, the Hunter Biden tax evasion, and illicit business dealings with Biden family?

Ms. MAHER. I am sorry, sir, I do not know.

Mr. FALLON. I believe that is zero. So, it is 25 to zero. Ms. Kerger, you are aware there is a political spectrum, goes all the way from the far right to the far left and everywhere in between. Would it trouble you to hear that for 6 months, there was an analysis done on PBS "NewsHour" from June to November 2023 where they found that "far right," that term was used 162 times and "far left" was only used 6 times? Do you find that troubling?

Ms. KERGER. I do not know the study that you are referring to, and I would be very interested in seeing it and understanding how they came up with those numbers.

Mr. FALLON. Media Research Center did a 6-month analysis. And it is not how do you find it. You say, "far right." It is terms. They used the term, "far right," 162 times, "far left" 6 times. That is a 96 to 4 percent skew. You are also aware that you covered the GOP and Democratic National Conventions in 2024?

Ms. MAHER. Yes, we did.

Mr. FALLON. OK. Interestingly, 72 percent of the coverage of the GOP convention was negative; 88 percent of the Democratic Convention was positive. Should not be surprising when you have anchors like Amina Noah, who described the Republican rhetoric as "outright racism, echoing White supremacy."

Ms. MAHER. NPR, you believe your reporters are fair, they are fair and they are working at it?

Ms. MAHER. I believe that they work to be, every day, sir.

Mr. FALLON. They are non-biased, and yet you have the voter registration issue. I mean, we are all human beings. We are all going to see through the world through a certain lens, and are you aware of any registered Republicans in your newsroom?

Ms. MAHER. I could not say registered, but I know we have conservatives in our newsroom, yes.

Mr. FALLON. OK. So, the recent registration, when it was looked at, 87 Democrats and zero Republicans registered.

Ms. MAHER. I found that very concerning, sir.

Mr. FALLON. Yes, I would. Not even 40 to 30 or 50 to 20, 87 to zero. But it should not be surprising when their own CEO says things like, "I am so done with late stage capitalism," or calls the President of United States a deranged racist sociopath, or that America is addicted to White supremacy. So, billions have gone into both of your coffers over the last several decades, and I understand why Democrats on this Committee are going to viciously and vehemently defend you all because you become a propaganda wing of the Democratic Party. Sixty-seven percent of your viewers and listeners identify as Democrat, with only 12 percent conservative, and you become a sandbox for leftist propagandists to frolic on taxpayer dime and no more. And when you said in the beginning you are going to promote a symphony of ideological viewpoints, yes, you do if you were left, leaning left, far left, more remarkably Marxist. I yield back.

Ms. GREENE. The gentleman's time has expired. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Fallon. I now recognize the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Gill.

Mr. GILL. Thank you, Chairwoman Greene, and I apologize. I am getting over a cold, so I am losing my voice here. Ms. Maher, I want to start with you just generally. Would you say you generally agree or disagree with the following statement: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles?"

Ms. MAHER. I would not say I agree with that.

Mr. GILL. That is good to hear. It is interesting because a lot of your thinking, as expressed by your public statements, is deeply infused with economic and cultural Marxism. Do you believe that America is addicted to White supremacy?

Ms. MAHER. I believe that I tweeted that, and as I have said earlier, I believe much of my thinking has evolved over the last half decade.

Mr. GILL. It has evolved. Why did you tweet that?

Ms. MAHER. I do not recall the exact context, sir, so I would not be able to say.

Mr. GILL. OK. Do you believe that America believes in Black plunder and White democracy?

Ms. MAHER. I do not believe that, sir.

Mr. GILL. You tweeted that in reference to a book you were reading at the time apparently, "The Case for Reparations."

Ms. MAHER. I do not think I have ever read that book, sir.

Mr. GILL. You tweeted about it. You said you took a day off to fully read "The Case for Reparations." You put that on Twitter in January 2020.

Ms. MAHER. I apologize. I do not recall that I did.

Mr. GILL. OK.

Ms. MAHER. No doubt that your tweet there is correct, but I do not recall that.

Mr. GILL. OK. Do you believe that White people inherently feel superior to other races?

Ms. MAHER. I do not.

Mr. GILL. You do not? You tweeted something to that effect. You said, “I grew up feeling superior. How White of me.” Why did you tweet that?

Ms. MAHER. I think I was probably reflecting on what it was to be to grow up in an environment where I had lots of advantages.

Mr. GILL. It sounds like you are saying that White people feel superior.

Ms. MAHER. I do not believe that anybody feels that way, sir. I was just reflecting on my own experiences.

Mr. GILL. Do you think that White people should pay reparations?

Ms. MAHER. I have never said that, sir.

Mr. GILL. Yes, you did. You said it in January 2020. You tweeted, “Yes, the North; yes, all of us; yes, America; yes, our original collective sin and unpaid debt; yes, reparations, yes; on this day.”

Ms. MAHER. I do not believe that was a reference to fiscal reparations, sir.

Mr. GILL. What kind of reparations was it a reference to?

Ms. MAHER. I think it was just a reference to the idea that we all owe much to the people who came before us.

Mr. GILL. That is a bizarre way to frame what you tweeted. OK. How much reparations have you personally paid?

Ms. MAHER. Sir, I do not believe that I have ever paid reparations.

Mr. GILL. OK. Just for everybody else?

Ms. MAHER. I am not asking anyone for reparations.

Mr. GILL. Seems to be what you are suggesting. Do you believe that looting is morally wrong?

Ms. MAHER. I believe that looting is illegal, and I referred to it as counterproductive. I think it should be prosecuted according to the law.

Mr. GILL. Do you believe it is morally wrong, though?

Ms. MAHER. Of course.

Mr. GILL. Of course. Then why did you refer to it as counterproductive? Very different way to describe it.

Ms. MAHER. It is both morally wrong and counterproductive, as well as illegal.

Mr. GILL. You tweeted, “It is hard to be mad about protests,” in reference to the BLM protests, “not prioritizing the private property of a system of oppression.” You did not condemn the looting. You said that it was counterproductive. NPR also promoted a book called, “In Defense of Looting.” Do you think that that is an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars?

Ms. MAHER. I am unfamiliar with that book, sir, and I do not believe that was at my time at NPR.

Mr. GILL. You tweeted that you read that book, but—

Ms. MAHER. I do not believe that I did read that book, sir.

Mr. GILL. Do you think that—a few years ago NPR educated America about “the whole community of genderqueer dinosaur enthusiasts.” Do you think that that is an appropriate use of tax dollars?

Ms. MAHER. I was not at NPR at the time, sir.

Mr. GILL. That is not the question, though. Do you think that that is an appropriate use of our tax dollars?

Ms. MAHER. I think our tax dollars that we use are to be able to provide a wide range of—

Mr. GILL. I will take that as a, yes, you do believe that that is appropriate. Your health advisor at NPR also stated in an interview that, “Fear of fatness is more harmful than actual fat.” Would you like to explain how fear of fatness is more harmful than actual fat? That is directly an editorial at NPR.

Ms. MAHER. I am not familiar with the editorial, and I do not believe that was published during my time here.

Mr. GILL. It is called, “Diet Culture is Everywhere. Here is How to Fight It.” Do you think that that is an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars?

Ms. MAHER. I think any reporting on health is an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars, yes.

Mr. GILL. And you think that editorializing that fat is not unhealthy is appropriate?

Ms. MAHER. I do not know what that article is, sir, and I am not familiar with it, so I could not say.

Mr. GILL. This is a fake news. Do you think that basic accommodations, like doorways or seat belts, represent “latent fat phobia?”

Ms. MAHER. I do not have an opinion, sir.

Mr. GILL. It is also from NPR. Do you think civility is racist?

Ms. MAHER. No, sir.

Mr. GILL. No. Your outlet ran an article entitled, “When Civility is Used as a Cudgel Against People of Color,” that was on “All Things Considered”. Would you like to explain?

Ms. MAHER. Well, I am not on the editorial side, sir. I am not familiar with that story.

Mr. GILL. You talk about how NPR is news. This is editorialization, and I will read it: “For many people of Color in the United States, civility is not so much social lubricant as it is a vehicle for containing them, preventing social mobility, and preserving the status quo.” This is garbage. I will spend all of my time doing everything I can to ensure you guys never get another dollar of taxpayer funding. This is complete garbage. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. GREENE. Thank you, Mr. Gill. I now recognize the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Jack, for 5 minutes.

Mr. JACK. Well, thank you very much, Madam Chair. I would like to just start and build off of something Mr. Fallon noted, and, Ms. Maher, I think you noted and just to confirm within your statement to him that NPR failed to accurately report the circumstances around the content within Hunter Biden’s laptop story. Is that fair to categorize your statement?

Ms. MAHER. Our current editorial leadership believes that we have made a mistake not reporting the story and more reporting it earlier, yes.

Mr. JACK. And I recognize you were not there at the time, but what intuitional controls—what have you done to ensure that never happens again?

Ms. MAHER. A number of things, sir, and thank you for the opportunity to speak to them. We have hired an additional editor corps, or which we refer to as our editorial review, to make sure that all stories, before they go out, are comprehensive and well-reviewed. We have instituted a monthly review to ensure that the most challenging stories of every month, that we go back and we look at what we may have missed, in order to not miss issues again, and change processes and policies to be able to have more robust conversation, and to ensure all areas and all views are considered.

We have hired analysts to be able to count the number of stories that we are running on any particular issue, including whose voices are represented. We have moved from bringing pundits on air to trying to bring direct policymakers on air so that we can ask questions of policymakers rather than hearing through other people's perspectives. Those are just a few of the things we have done so far. I have got a couple others, if you have time.

Mr. JACK. Thank you, and you can submit those for the record.

Would you suggest then that the failure to accurately report those circumstances and the content around that story, would you suggest today, as I feel, and many others feel, that, that impacted the 2020 election?

Ms. MAHER. I could not say, sir. I do not know.

Mr. JACK. Well, I just asked because you have a broad viewership, broad listenership. And I am just curious if it is so broad and it is so necessary for us to continue to give taxpayer funds, as you all submit to me, to misaccurately report something that is incredibly important around a 2020 election is very concerning, so welcome another thought from you there.

Ms. MAHER. I believe that we made a mistake, as I said, and I believe that we have taken that to heart and are focused on how do we report, and report effectively in a timely fashion, on all the issues that matter to all Americans. I hear your concern, sir, and I want you to know that we are truly working on this.

Mr. JACK. I would like to spend the rest of my time talking about funding, and I know that some of my colleagues talked about it a little bit today, but could you walk us through the amount of money that NPR receives from CPB annually?

Ms. MAHER. Yes. Sure, sir. We received \$11.2 million this past year, the majority of which goes to the public radio satellite system, which we operate on behalf of the entire public radio network. We also received a smaller amount of funding in the course of the past year that went to help us hire those additional editors and analysts in order to be able to beef up that editorial review. We received funding to support the coverage of the recent election in order to make sure that we had our journalists all across the country and were able to speak to Americans of all different political backgrounds.

Mr. JACK. And what percentage of your budget share comes from the Federal Government?

Ms. MAHER. Depending on how you count it, sir, it is less than 5 percent.

Mr. JACK. And to help me understand, too, the CPB, you know, as I understand it, Congress has appropriated \$500 million to CPB.

It flows out, and I think smaller radio stations go and apply for grants for it. Do you receive payment from smaller radio stations through licensing agreements and things of that nature?

Ms. MAHER. We do, and the fees for that are designed around the amount of funding that they get from private member donations, so the fees are not designed around Federal funding. They are designed around what sort of direct private support and donations they receive from members and listeners.

Mr. JACK. Well, I noted Mr. Jordan today suggested that you are fundraising off of this hearing today. And a question that I have then, if you receive less than 5 percent and over and over today you have said that private funding helps support the mission and the work of NPR, could NPR survive without the 5 percent that we give NPR annually?

Ms. MAHER. My belief is that the funding is essential to the public radio system, and that is not only the 246 member stations, but the 1,300 stations across the Nation so that we are able as a network to serve all Americans with a hundred percent coverage. If Federal funding for our network goes away, it means that people in rural parts of America, places where they cannot afford to make private donations to support their local journalism, those will be harmed. But sir, if I may, the bigger harm as well or the additional harm is that Americans in places that are affluent or do have many media choices will not be able to hear from their fellow Americans that are often underheard.

Mr. JACK. Bottom line, if the 5 percent went away, would NPR still exist?

Ms. MAHER. Well, it would be incredibly damaging to the Federal, excuse me, to the National Public Radio system.

Mr. JACK. I yield back.

Ms. GREENE. Turn your microphone on.

Mr. GILL. Madam Chair, I would just like to submit to the record this flash drive.

Ms. GREENE. You ask unanimous consent?

Mr. GILL. I ask unanimous consent to submit to the record this flash drive containing six feet worth of documents documenting NPR and PBS has political bias.

Ms. GREENE. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. GILL. Thank you.

Ms. GREENE. In closing, I want to thank our witnesses once again for their testimony today. I now yield to the Ranking Member Lynch for his closing remarks.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for having this hearing. I want to thank the witnesses for your willingness to testify. In closing, I want to follow-up on Mr. Khanna's point. I would point out to my colleagues that there are some government functions that are not merely transactions. There are some undertakings that we, as a country, engage in, which are not necessarily justified by cash on the barrel at the point of purchase. Everything is not a transaction. It is not like selling a car, although that is exactly what the President was doing on the lawn of the White House the other day.

Sometimes a government program is a long-term investment. I think that applies to public broadcasting, like when you use public

television to teach kids their numbers and their alphabet because in some households, that might be the only source of instruction available. More often it could be an exercise in trust because a lot of our parents out there, 88 percent of parents, said they trusted PBS Kids. Or when you have a documentary given by a historian, like Ken Burns, and he does research and drills down on the letters and firsthand correspondence of Civil War veterans and families North and South and gives us the hard facts of the Civil War. Hopefully, we are teaching or at least reminding people of the wrongfulness of slavery and the consequences from a system of bondage and the horrific price that was paid, and perhaps is still being paid.

Everything is not a transaction, but I do believe that some people see it that way. I think President Trump and Elon Musk see life, often, as a series of transactions. Much of the support we provide to seniors is not a profitable transaction because they are older and vulnerable, but they have paid for their fair share into Social Security. That is why FDR designed it that way. Some people just wanted the government to promise to pay a pension, but FDR knew that if he had Americans pay into that system, that their sense of fairness would cause them to defend that pension, and so they would fight like hell to get what they had coming. It sounds like we might have to test that theory if Elon Musk and Howard Lutnick have their way.

Another thing we do that is not necessarily profitable in a financial sense, is that we care for our veterans. It is a promise we made to our sons and daughters in uniform, and it is the right thing to do. And veterans' care and veteran benefits are special because those benefits are owed to every veteran who lies in a hospital bed in every VA hospital across the country, because those benefits are for courageous service previously and honorably rendered to our country. And so, now it is the time for America and Congress to fulfill their obligation as promised. That is not a transaction. But because of that cost, the Trump Administration VA has announced 80,000 layoffs at the VA.

Trump and Vance also see support for Ukraine as a transaction, even though they have been invaded by Russia and are fighting for their lives and their freedom. As we saw a couple of weeks ago, for President Trump and Mr. Vance, it was a power transaction. And as the President insisted, Zelensky had no cards to play, and as Vance pointed out, he refused to sufficiently bend the knee and he did not dress up. These examples point out the nature of the presidency.

Throughout our history, the President has never been viewed as the huckster-in-chief. Instead, our most successful Presidents have occupied a position of what could be seen as moral leadership, which might cause some to conclude that America is bankrupt right now, but I have hope in the genius of our Constitution that the checks and balances of our government framework might once again compensate for that shortcoming in the White House. It could be that Congress might provide that balance, or it may be the judicial branch that steps into the breach, or it might require the ultimate source of power in our system, the people themselves to demand that we fulfill our obligations to all those most vulnerable



in our country, wounded veterans, seniors, children and the poor to whom so much is owed.

Madam Chair, I appreciate the opportunity here to address this issue. I would have preferred that we were talking about the security breach that occurred recently, but perhaps that will be for another day, but I thank you for your courtesy, and I yield back.

Ms. GREENE. I now recognize myself for closing remarks. The United States is \$36 trillion in debt. In Fiscal Year 2024, the government spent over \$1.8 trillion more than it took in, and in Fiscal Year 2025, the interest on our debt is expected to exceed \$1 trillion. As we continue investigating waste, fraud, and abuse, and we can look no further than the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the LGBTQ indoctrination of our children, the systematic racism narrative, and the support for censorship being pushed by the heads of NPR and PBS are just several of the many abuses of taxpayer dollars. And if you are one of the select few who might support such content, you can personally support and fund it with your own money through private donations because the reality is the United States of America is broke and cannot afford it.

And after all, PBS and NPR are already fundraising off of this Committee hearing. The American people are closely following along today in this long-awaited hearing to hear the case for why Americans hard-earned tax dollars should continue for public broadcasting. I think from what we have heard here today, the American people will not continue to allow such propaganda to be funded through the Federal Government with their hard-earned tax dollars. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, that we give over half a billion dollars to, no longer serves the public. It serves a narrow audience of wealthy, liberal elites who are out of touch with everyday Americans. Not only have the times changed and the American people who once needed these outlets can now access the news anywhere at any time, but the content that is being put out through the state-sponsored outlets is so radical, it is brainwashing the American people, and, more significantly, American children, with un-American, anti-family, pro-crime, fake news.

The American people do not support their taxpayer dollars going to NPR articles, like "How is sex determined, scientists say it is complicated," which discusses how biological sex is not limited to male or female. Or another article about how stories on crime are rife with misinformation and racism, or about how birds and trees are racist. Over a 7-month period, the Media Research Center discovered the PBS "NewsHour" gave over 90 percent of the airtime to the left on gender ideology stories. Ninety percent. As mentioned earlier, PBS was the outlet that featured the child predator drag queen on the education show for kids ages three to eight years old. And to clarify the record, because our witness, Ms. Kerger, lied under oath and said it was not featured on PBS, this show was aired on PBS on April 1, 2021, and we will take a look at this video right now. We are using a TV today because our audio system is having problems. Let us go ahead and watch this video.

[Video shown.]

Ms. GREENE. The hips go, swish, swish, swish. The shoulders go, shimmy, shimmy, shimmy. That is repulsive. That is not what children ages three to eight should ever be watching—a grown, biologi-

cal man posing as a woman. And by the way, Ms. Kerger, that was aired on April 1, 2021, and then something happened. It was not an accident and it was not just for a brief time that it was up. It was aired April 1, and then somehow it expired May 24. Later on, it was taken down. I wonder why that was taken down.

Another egregious example includes back in 2010, PBS' Tavis Smiley stated that Christians blow up people every single day. I have not seen that ever happen in my life. And today, if you look on NPR's website, there is still zero mention of any negative coverage of any Democrat today, and trust us, there are more than plenty of examples to pull from. How about a Member from this Committee making fun of the Governor of Texas for having a disability and living his life in a wheelchair, Ms. Maher?

From headlines to podcast documentaries, to children's programming, NPR and PBS have all but abandoned their promise to deliver unbiased, nonpartisan, and fact-based reporting. The American people have woken up to this nonsense and blatant disregard for truth, and truth matters, and they will not put up with it any longer. Contrary to the beliefs of the head of NPR, Ms. Maher, truth is not subjective. It is actually very important, and there are not multiple truths. There is just one. For a civilization to exist, objective truth must exist. It must be embraced. It must be protected. It is not a distraction, and despite many attempts to whitewash it, truth will prevail.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting is using taxpayer dollars to actively suppress the truth, suppress diverse viewpoints, and produce some of the most outlandish, ludicrous content. After listening to what we have heard today, we will be calling for the complete and total defunding and dismantling of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Here is how it works in America: every single day—every single day—private businesses operate on their own without government funding. We believe that you all can hate us on your own dime.

With that, and without objection, all Members have 5 legislative days within which to submit materials and additional written questions for witnesses, which will be forwarded to the witnesses.

If there is no further business, without objection, the Subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:29 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

