



Office of the Chief
Records Officer for the
U.S. Government

Sent Via Email. No Hard Copy to Follow.

August 1, 2022

Michelle Thomas
Department Records Officer
Department of Homeland Security
301 7th Street SW
Washington, DC 20407

Dear Michelle Thomas,

Based on multiple media reports, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has been made aware of the potential loss of text messages within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), including the text messages of former acting Secretary Chad Wolf and former acting Deputy Secretary Ken Cuccinelli during the January 2021 “reset” of government mobile phones.

In accordance with 36 CFR 1230.16(b), NARA requests that DHS look into this matter. The Department must identify and report to NARA whether any government phones and/or accounts that were maintained by DHS lost text messages or any other records as part of the mobile phone migration process. In particular, we are requesting that you focus on the devices and accounts of senior leaders of DHS. This is not limited to text messages that may pertain to the January 6, 2021 inquiry. Additionally, this review should include how DHS manages their text messages and how the process of device migration at the Department complies with federal recordkeeping requirements.

We understand that this review may take a considerable amount of time to conduct, and may be put on hold pending an ongoing review by the Office of Inspector General. We are requesting an interim report with 30 calendar days that will include DHS’s plan for review and a timeline to complete this review. If the Department determines that federal records were deleted without proper disposition authority, your final report must include a complete description of the records affected, a statement of the exact circumstances surrounding the deletion of messages, a statement of the safeguards established to prevent further loss of documentation, and details of all agency actions taken to salvage, retrieve, or reconstruct the records.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter. If you have any questions or wish to discuss further, please contact me at laurence.brewer@nara.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurence V. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

LAURENCE BREWER
Chief Records Officer
for the U.S. Government

Cc: Eric Hysen, Chief Information Officer and Senior Agency Official for Records Management,
Department of Homeland Security