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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION,  
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6300

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<http://help.senate.gov>

October 3, 2017

The Honorable Steven Mnuchin  
Secretary  
Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Mnuchin:

Prior to his resignation on September 29, 2017, former Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Thomas Price committed to reimburse taxpayers for the cost of his travel on private planes for official business. While Price may no longer be Secretary of HHS, he still has the responsibility to follow through on his commitment to repay the American public. Anything less is a clear indication that Price was not in fact sorry for his abuse of taxpayer dollars, but was just sorry that he was caught.

By the latest estimates, Price's travel on private planes and military jets for official business amounted to over \$1 million. On September 28, one day before his resignation, Price released a statement saying, "Today, I will write a personal check to the US Treasury for the expenses of my travel on private charter planes. The taxpayers won't pay a dime for my seat on those planes."<sup>1</sup> An HHS spokesperson later confirmed that "Secretary Price will write a personal check to the US Treasury for \$51,887.31." This amount was said to reflect the difference between the cost of his seat on private planes and what it would have cost had Price made the same trips in business class on commercial flights.<sup>2</sup> The HHS statement was careful to make clear that Price only planned to reimburse taxpayers for "his seats on charter planes," not for the costs of the chartered planes in their entirety.<sup>3</sup>

Price's plans to reimburse taxpayers for only a fraction of the costs incurred for his private and military travel is entirely inadequate.<sup>4</sup> At the time of his confirmation, Price's wealth was estimated at approximately \$14 million.<sup>5</sup> In fact, according to his certificate of divestiture and financial disclosures, Price has substantially increased his wealth during his tenure as Secretary

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2017/09/28/hhs-secretary-price-statement-on-private-charter-airplane-travel.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.thedailybeast.com/hhs-secretary-tom-price-will-reimburse-taxpayers-for-private-jet-expenses>

<sup>3</sup>

[http://www.slate.com/blogs/the\\_slatest/2017/09/28/tom\\_prices\\_apologizes\\_for\\_charter\\_flights\\_promises\\_some\\_reimbursement.html](http://www.slate.com/blogs/the_slatest/2017/09/28/tom_prices_apologizes_for_charter_flights_promises_some_reimbursement.html)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2017/09/29/politics/tom-price-resigns/index.html>

<sup>5</sup> Public Financial Disclosure Report (OGE Form 278e) for Thomas E. Price, Office of Government Ethics (January 11, 2017); <http://money.cnn.com/2017/09/29/news/economy/tom-price-worth/index.html>.

by selling off shares of stock, including nearly 500,000 shares of stock in Innate Immunotherapeutics valued at about \$320,000 at the time of his divestiture.<sup>6</sup>

To confirm that former Secretary Price does in fact reimburse the federal government, please respond to the following questions and document requests no later than October 17, 2017:

1. Has former Secretary Price reimbursed the U.S. Treasury for the cost of his travel on chartered planes?
2. If he has, what was the amount of the reimbursement?
3. If no payment has been received, what is the date by which the U.S. Treasury expects the payment?
4. Did former Secretary Price or other HHS officials explain to your Department how they arrived at the amount of the payment? Did the U.S. Treasury or HHS conduct any assessments to confirm the cost of the former Secretary's seat on the chartered planes or the total costs of the planes?
5. Have any other Cabinet officials or federal employees within the Trump Administration reimbursed the U.S. Treasury for the cost of their chartered travel for official business? If so, please provide the details of those transactions, including, but not limited to:
  - a. the individual's name;
  - b. the individual's position;
  - c. the amount of his or her reimbursement; and
  - d. the date the U.S. Treasury received the payment.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this critical matter. If you have any questions, or would like to further discuss compliance with this request, please contact Elizabeth Letter of Senator Murray's HELP Committee staff at 202-224-6403.

Sincerely,



Patty Murray  
United States Senator  
Ranking Member, Senate Health, Education,  
Labor, and Pensions Committee

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<sup>6</sup> Certificate of Divestiture for Thomas E. Price, Office of Government Ethics (February 10, 2017); Public Financial Disclosure Report: Periodic Transaction Report (OGE Form 278-E) for Thomas Price, Office of Government Ethics (March 30, 2017); <https://www.wsj.com/articles/tom-price-tripled-his-investment-in-biomedical-firm-with-sale-of-stock-1491341091?mod=mktw>.