

# MAIL SECURITY ALERT:

BY DAVID HALE

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## THE RAYSECUR® MONTHLY MAIL THREAT

reports catalog global open-source incidents reported to the media. Due to the lack of reporting to authorities, security leaders face sizable challenges in gaining a clear view of the types and volume of mail threats occurring worldwide. These reports serve to close that gap and provide timely information.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has designated the following CBRNE substances as critical mail threats. MailSecur is the only screening solution that can detect all nine.



BIOLOGICAL



CHEMICAL



LIQUID



ILLICIT ITEMS



RADIOLOGICAL



CONTRABAND



EXPLOSIVE



POWDER



NUCLEAR

June, 2023

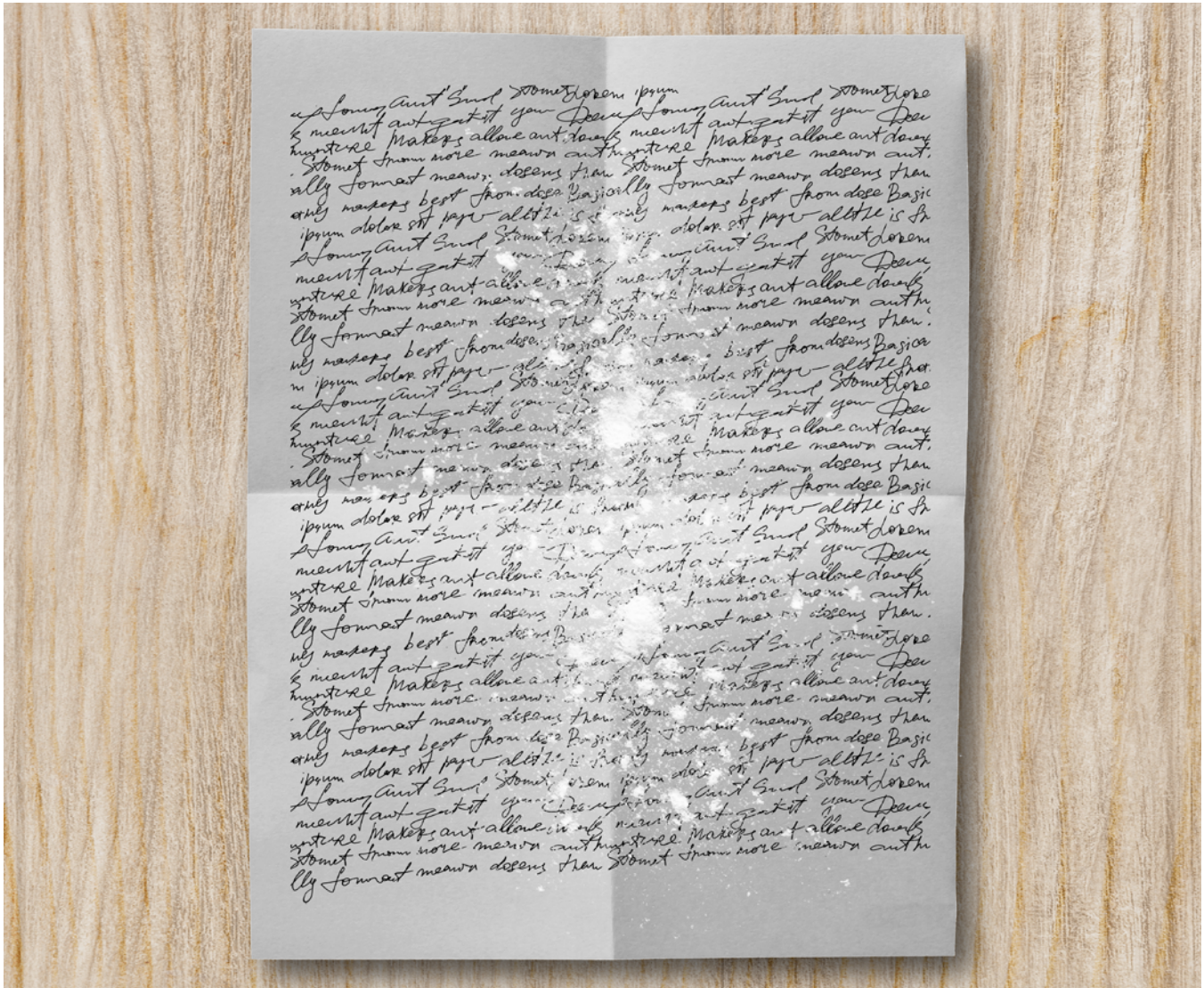
## Special Report: U.S. Legislators Targeted with White Powder Threats

In June 2023, there were three separate incidents of postal mail containing white powder threats, along with cryptic and threatening messages being delivered to U.S. lawmakers, state representatives, and other public officials. As of this report, over 100 pieces of mail were distributed to mostly Republicans, in Tennessee, Montana, and Kansas. The mail items appeared innocuous as they included messages of congratulations or similar, intended to put the recipient at ease with what could otherwise be viewed as suspicious packages. It is worth noting that only some of these threat letters reached their intended targets. In some instances, shared addresses with multiple separate offices accidentally received the white powder threats.

The series of threats, in quick succession, may be significant, as mail is often used as an escalation point. While it is not clear what triggered these incidents, the country just marked the first anniversary of the Roe vs. Wade reversal. There are also ongoing conflicts on various societal topics, including the rights of transgender youths, the banning of books in schools, and the ongoing legal proceedings against former President Trump.

Having more than 100 mail threats delivered in a week could be a harbinger of what is yet to come. With the 2024 Presidential campaign quickly approaching, candidates are actively ramping up their outreach with speeches and interviews nationwide. Any controversy associated with their actions and political views may cause a spike in mail threats toward officials across all party lines.

The reality is that mail-based threats are often overlooked relative to other security priorities. However, the risk is real, and the recent aggressions targeting many government officials demonstrate that they can be sent at any time and easily evade detection until it is too late. Remaining vigilant, understanding that mail is a relatively soft target, and developing standard operating processes (SOP) are all excellent first steps in closing mail security gaps and keeping people safe.



# Threat Reviews

## About 100 letters containing a white powder were sent to public officials across Kansas

### CNN

Approximately 100 letters containing a white powder have been received by state legislators and public officials across Kansas, officials said, setting off an investigation that includes state and federal agencies.



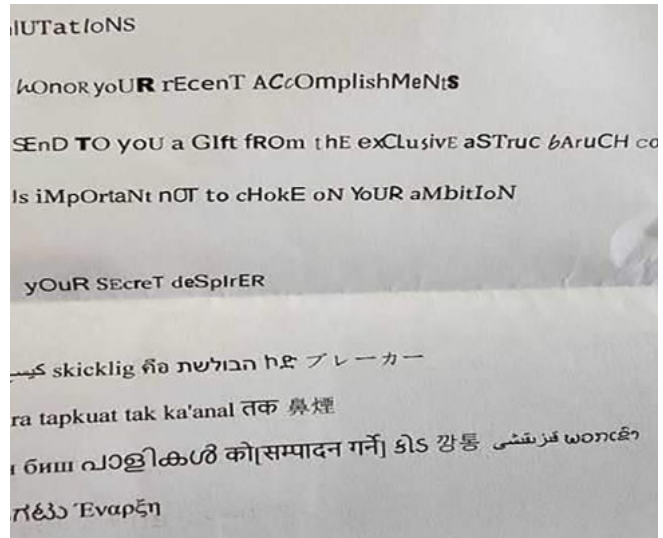
Preliminary tests on a small sample of the letters show “the substance is presumptively negative for common biological agents of concern,” the Kansas Bureau of Investigation said Sunday.

“Further and more complete testing will be conducted on this sample, as well as on additional letters that have been collected, in an effort to determine the components of the substance,” the bureau said.

No injuries have been reported, the KBI and a spokesperson for state House Speaker Daniel Hawkins said. Hawkins, a Republican, received one of the letters, his spokesperson Carrie Rahfaldt said.

Republican state Rep. Stephen Owens said he also received one of the letters and believes the others who received them are fellow Republicans.

The letter read, in part, “it’s important not to choke on your ambition,” and was signed “your secret despirer,” according to a copy Owens shared with CNN.



The FBI is assisting the KBI and other state agencies with the investigation. The bureau’s Kansas City field office is urging the public to “remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity to law enforcement,” an FBI statement issued Friday said.

Republican state Rep. Tory Marie Blew said the response to recover the letter she received included a specialized hazmat team, the bomb squad, the FBI, the KBI and hours of work from all teams involved.

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# Threat Reviews

## Montana legislators receive suspicious packages with white powder

### CNN

Montana legislators are the latest lawmakers to receive “anonymous, threatening letters containing white powder,” amid an FBI investigation into similar incidents across the country, according to state officials.

“At least two Montana legislators have received suspicious packages in the mail containing a white powder. At this time, both are fine and law enforcement is investigating and will be testing the substance,” the state Senate GOP tweeted.

Gov. Greg Gianforte on Friday said he’s “received disturbing reports that Montana legislators are receiving anonymous, threatening letters containing white powder. The state will bring to bear whatever resources are needed to support law enforcement officers as they investigate.”

On Thursday, Republican state lawmakers in Tennessee received threatening letters containing a suspicious substance. The letters were sent to GOP lawmakers’ offices inside the Cordell Hull state office building on the grounds of the state Capitol in Nashville, officials said. The FBI said the letters had an “unknown substance.”



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# Threat Reviews

## Tennessee Republican lawmakers receive mail with ‘white powder substance’

**NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)**

A Tennessee legislative office building in Nashville reopened Thursday after a temporary lockdown prompted by multiple Republican leaders receiving what House Speaker Cameron Sexton called “a white powder substance” in the mail.

Hazmat teams were called to assess the situation, Sexton said in a statement.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation said the letters contained an “unknown substance.” “Laboratory testing is ongoing but at this time has not indicated a risk to public safety,” the FBI said. “Law enforcement and public safety officials are working to determine how many letters were sent, the individual or individuals responsible for the letters, and the motive behind the letters.”

The incident comes a few days after officials in Kansas said that about 100 letters containing suspicious white powder, which preliminary tests found negative for common dangerous toxins, were sent to lawmakers at their homes and to other public officials across the state. Authorities did not immediately say if they believe the Tennessee and Kansas events are connected.



A series of emails to the Tennessee legislative building staff Thursday began with notice that no one was allowed on the 6th floor. About an hour later, another said no one could leave or enter the building and an hour after that all but the sixth floor reopened. Access was completely reinstated shortly thereafter, said House Republican Caucus spokesperson Jennifer Easton.



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## David Hale is an EODSecur Mail Threat SME

David Hale is a resident expert and trainer in narcotics and illicit drug detection in the EODSecur services team. He partners with customers across the country to assist in their mail screening operations to find dangerous substances and contraband in mail. Before joining RaySecur, David was a decorated law enforcement officer, where he worked on narcotics investigations, led special response teams, and was selected to be a member of the Federal Organized Crime and Drug Task Force. During his tenure, he frequently engaged with correction facilities on drug smuggling and trafficking investigations within the prisons. In addition, to law enforcement and investigations, he is skilled as a hazardous materials disposal and response operator.

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