

June 23, 2026

The Honorable Todd Blanche
Acting Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Acting Attorney General Blanche:

I write ahead of your confirmation hearing to bring to your attention multiple outstanding oversight requests that I submitted to the Department of Justice during your tenure as Deputy Attorney General and Acting Attorney General. These requests, which number in the dozens, have gone unanswered, leading me to seek responses via the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)—something to which a Member of Congress, with constitutional oversight authority, should never have to resort. The Department then failed to answer those FOIA requests in an adequate or timely fashion, despite FOIA’s statutory mandate that agencies “shall make available to the public” all requested, nonexempt information.¹

At her confirmation hearing, former Attorney General Bondi committed to me that she would respond to questions from members of both parties—even FOIA requests.² Similarly, FBI Director Patel told me at his confirmation hearing that he would “ensure timely and appropriate responses to oversight inquiries.”³ He also said in the *Wall Street Journal*, the night before his hearing, that “Members of Congress have hundreds of unanswered requests to the FBI. If confirmed, I will be a strong advocate for congressional oversight, ensuring that the FBI operates with the openness necessary to rebuild trust by simply replying to lawmakers.”⁴

None of those promises were kept. No new Attorney General should be confirmed until the Department has provided meaningful responses to all outstanding oversight requests, and commits to timely responses going forward.

A catalog of my unanswered oversight requests follows. Please preserve all records relevant to these topics and produce thorough responses to each outstanding request before your hearing.

¹ 5 U.S.C. § 552(a).

² *The Nomination of the Honorable Pamela Jo Bondi to be Attorney General of the United States: Hearing Before the S. Comm. on the Judiciary*, 119th Cong. (Jan. 15, 2026) (testimony of Hon. Pamela Jo Bondi).

³ Questions for the Record to Kashyap Patel from Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, *Nomination Hearing: Hearing Before the S. Comm. on the Judiciary*, 119th Cong. (Jan. 30, 2025).

⁴ Kash Patel, Opinion, *Kash Patel: How I’ll Rebuild Public Trust in the FBI*, WALL ST. J. (Jan. 29, 2025), <https://www.wsj.com/opinion/how-ill-rebuild-public-trust-in-the-fbi-kash-patel-on-what-he-would-do-if-confirmed-0e116c87>.

1. Outstanding Questions for the Record.

FBI Director Patel and former Attorney General Bondi testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee in September and October 2025, respectively. I also submitted written Questions for the Record on topics including Director Patel's still-undisclosed grand jury testimony in the Mar-a-Lago classified documents case, his use of jet travel for personal purposes, the decision to close a bribery investigation into Tom Homan, and the review of suspicious activity reports relating to Jeffrey Epstein. I have not received a response to any questions. I would add that Patel appears to have lied to the Committee.

2. Actions Related to Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell.

I have submitted multiple requests to DOJ about its actions related to Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell. First, on July 28, 2025, Ranking Member Durbin and I sent a letter to you asking for information related to the interviews you conducted with Ghislaine Maxwell and DOJ's review of files related to Jeffrey Epstein. We noted that your meeting with Ms. Maxwell was especially odd given your senior role at DOJ, your unfamiliarity with the case against Ms. Maxwell, her "history and willingness to lie under oath," her concurrent attempts to overturn her criminal convictions, and recent reporting about President Trump's relationship with Epstein.⁵

Then, roughly one week after your unusual meetings with Ms. Maxwell, she was transferred to a minimum-security facility. As I noted in my August 7, 2025, letter inquiring about this matter, Ms. Maxwell's transfer appeared to violate standard BOP policy prohibiting someone with Ms. Maxwell's history of sex offenses to be placed in a minimum-security facility. The timing of these events raised the question whether Ms. Maxwell's transfer was part of a political deal with you. Then, following your ascension to Acting Attorney General, BOP updated its policy to give you unilateral authority to determine where BOP inmates are imprisoned. I again wrote to BOP on June 23, 2026, to ask for information related to that policy change.

On March 9, 2026, I requested that DOJ preserve all records related to its failure to disclose information regarding sexual assault allegations made against President Trump in 2019. It appears that DOJ still has not published 37 pages of those records, despite the clear requirements of the Epstein Files Transparency Act.

On March 16, 2026, I inquired with DOJ, FBI, and DEA about a DOJ investigation involving Jeffrey Epstein—Operation Trip Knot. Although Epstein's name apparently "surfaced repeatedly" during that investigation, DOJ appears to have disclosed only one document related to this investigation as part of the Epstein Files Transparency Act.⁶

⁵ Letter from Sens. Richard J. Durbin & Sheldon Whitehouse to Hon. Todd Blanche, at 2 (July 28, 2025), <https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-07-28%20Letter%20to%20DOJ%20re%20Maxwell.pdf>.

⁶ Jason Leopold, *Ketamine, Prostitution and Money: Details of a Secret DEA Probe of Jeffrey Epstein*, BLOOMBERG (Mar. 6, 2026), <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2026-03-06/epstein-investigated-in-dea-probe-for-ketamine-money-laundering>.

3. Former Attorney General Bondi's Departure.

I have also inquired about former Attorney General Bondi's departure and your ascension to Acting Attorney General. The details of that transition matter both to ensure that former Attorney General Bondi complied with all federal ethics laws and to understand the contours of your temporary duties. More than two months after my April 13, 2026, inquiry, and on the verge of your confirmation hearing, we still have no response.

4. Hiring of Jared Wise to Work in Deputy Attorney General's Office.

Last year, DOJ hired Jared Wise to be part of the so-called "Weaponization Working Group" run by Ed Martin. DOJ apparently hired Mr. Wise despite—or perhaps because of—his role in the attack on the U.S. Capitol and his assault on police defending the Capitol on January 6, 2021. A grand jury indicted Mr. Wise on six charges, including assaulting law enforcement officers and aiding and abetting the same conduct. Video footage shows Mr. Wise calling the officers who defended the Capitol "disgusting," "the Nazi," and "the Gestapo."⁷ When rioters attacked these officers, he shouted, "Yeah, fuck them! Yeah, kill 'em!"⁸

Ranking Member Durbin, Senator Schiff, and I urged you in a September 3, 2025, letter to immediately terminate Mr. Wise given his record, explain how he was hired, and explain the nature of the work he did for you. Instead, Mr. Wise remained at DOJ for at least nine months, and DOJ has never explained what he did and why he was suitable to work at the Department.

5. Changes to Public Integrity Section.

DOJ's Public Integrity Section (PIN) was formed after Watergate to ensure that DOJ investigates public corruption without regard for partisanship. DOJ under your leadership has dismantled PIN, reportedly reducing the number of full-time career prosecutors from forty to two and removing PIN's authority to oversee corruption investigations.⁹ DOJ under this administration has focused obsessively on purging any offices or officials involved with the prosecutions against President Trump, while letting flagrant corruption go uninvestigated.

On March 20, 2025, I sent a letter asking DOJ to reverse course or, at minimum, provide a briefing on these changes. No such briefing has occurred. DOJ's multiple embarrassments in selective and vindictive prosecution of multiple Democratic officials and public officials personally targeted by President Trump are the entirely predictable result of DOJ removing oversight by career PIN prosecutors.

⁷ Letter from Sens. Richard J. Durbin, Sheldon Whitehouse & Adam B. Schiff to Hon. Todd Blanche, at 2 (Sept. 3, 2025), <https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Letter%20to%20Bondi%20on%20Jared%20Wise.pdf>.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Ryan Lucas, *How the Trump administration has undermined the fight against public corruption*, NPR (May 13, 2026), <https://www.npr.org/2026/05/13/g-s1-121485/trump-pardons-public-corruption-justice>.

6. Shuttering of Task Force KleptoCapture.

One of Attorney General Bondi's first actions was shuttering anti-kleptocracy efforts, including Task Force KleptoCapture, the Kleptocracy Team, and the Kleptocracy Asset Recovery Initiative. Formed after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Task Force KleptoCapture had secured the forfeiture, or consent to forfeiture, of at least \$170 million worth of private oligarch assets—with approximately \$450 million more pending in litigation. Similarly, the Kleptocracy Asset Recovery Initiative was a 15-year-old program that had recovered more than \$1.7 billion for the benefit of people harmed by corruption and abuses of office.

I asked on February 28, 2025, for a briefing on why DOJ chose to abandon such a valuable effort—especially during Russia's ongoing illegal invasion of Ukraine. I have still not received that briefing.

7. Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund

Just two months into this administration, DOJ and the FBI reportedly began investigating the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund after EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin announced on social media his desire to claw back the funding. Zeldin asserted without evidence that the grant awards were fraudulent, “a rush job with reduced oversight” meant to “get billions of your tax dollars out the door before Inauguration Day.”¹⁰ Public reporting indicates that the investigation was not properly predicated, but was a pretext to interfere with the lawfully appropriated and obligated funds, leading to the resignation of a senior career attorney in the U.S. Attorney's Office. Following the refusal of any career attorney, the Interim U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia personally submitted his own seizure warrant application to freeze the funds, which the court rejected for lack of probable cause. Then, the Acting Deputy Attorney General shopped the same investigation and warrant application to other U.S. Attorney's offices, without success.¹¹

On March 11, 2025, I wrote to former Attorney General Bondi and Director Patel requesting information regarding DOJ's and the FBI's investigation of the Fund. On May 15, 2025, DOJ responded to my request, refusing to provide information regarding the investigation.

8. “Anti-Weaponization Fund”

On May 18, 2026, DOJ announced the creation of a \$1.776 billion “Anti-Weaponization Fund” as part of a purported settlement of litigation with President Trump. You testified to Congress last month that rioters who stormed the Capitol and attacked police officers on January 6, 2021,

¹⁰ EPA Press Office, *Administrator Zeldin Announces that Billions of Dollars Worth of “Gold Bars” Have Been Located at Outside Financial Institution*, EPA (Feb. 13, 2025), <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/administrator-zeldin-announces-billions-dollars-worth-gold-bars-have-been-located>.

¹¹ See Spencer S. Hsu, Maxine Joselow & Nicolás Rivero, *FBI takes up EPA probe amid pushback from judge, prosecutors*, WASH. POST (Feb. 27, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2025/02/27/trump-fbi-epa-grant-investigation/>; Spencer S. Hsu, Carol D. Leonnig & Nicolás Rivero, *High-ranking D.C. federal prosecutor resigns over order to freeze EPA funds*, WASH. POST (Feb. 18, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/2025/02/18/federal-prosecutor-dc-resigns/>.

could apply to be paid under the Fund.¹² Although you subsequently told a House subcommittee that DOJ would not move forward with the Fund, Department lawyers recently refused to submit a sworn declaration providing that assurance to a federal court.¹³ Moreover, reports have suggested that administration officials are exploring alternative ways to reward January 6 rioters and other administration allies through the Federal Tort Claims Act.¹⁴

On May 19, 2026, DOJ released an addendum to the purported settlement—signed only by you—stating that the U.S. government would be “forever barred” from pursuing “examinations” of President Trump, his family, “related or affiliated individuals,” and related trusts and businesses, for any matter involving previously filed tax returns or “Lawfare and/or Weaponization.”¹⁵ This addendum purports to grant President Trump and a wide swath of associates and related companies immunity from any ongoing tax audits.

On May 26, 2026, Ranking Member Durbin and I requested that DOJ preserve all related records. DOJ has not acknowledged compliance with that request.

9. Proposal to Supersede State Ethics Processes.

Earlier this year, DOJ proposed a rule purporting to give the Attorney General the right to review any state bar complaint against DOJ attorneys and to request that state bars suspend investigations until DOJ completes its review. The proposed rule also states that DOJ “shall take appropriate action to enforce this regulation or to prevent the bar disciplinary authorities from interfering” if state bars refuse to cede to DOJ’s demand.¹⁶ That proposed rule prompted more than one million comments, including a highly critical comment from the Conference of Chief Justices—represented by state chief justices from across the country.¹⁷

On March 16, 2026, I requested that DOJ preserve all records related to the proposed rule, including any materials reflecting DOJ’s development of and decision to issue the proposed rule. DOJ has not acknowledged its compliance with this request either. It appears that DOJ has disabled the Office of Professional Responsibility, so the suggestion that DOJ would conduct legitimate inquiries merits examination.

¹² Hailey Fuchs & Josh Gerstein, *Todd Blanche tells appropriators payouts for Jan. 6 rioters are possible*, POLITICO (May 19, 2026), <https://www.politico.com/live-updates/2026/05/19/congress/blanche-doesnt-rule-out-j6-payouts-00927704>.

¹³ Tierney Sneed, *DOJ rebuffs judge’s request for Blanche to declare in court that anti-weaponization fund is dead*, CNN (June 19, 2026), <https://www.cnn.com/2026/06/19/politics/doj-anti-weaponization-fund-judge-request>.

¹⁴ Sarah Fitzpatrick, *Trump Isn’t Giving Up on His Slush Fund*, ATLANTIC (June 11, 2026), <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/2026/06/trump-anti-weaponization-fund/687500/>; Rebecca Beitsch, *DOJ has other routes to payouts beyond Trump ‘anti-weaponization’ fund*, HILL (June 7, 2026), <https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/5912674-justice-department-settlements-ftca/>.

¹⁵ OFF. OF THE ATT’Y GEN., ADDENDUM 1 (2026), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/media/1441216/dl>.

¹⁶ Review of State Bar Complaints and Allegations Against Current and Former Attorneys for the Government, 91 Fed. Reg. 10780, 10787 (proposed Mar. 5, 2026) (to be codified at 28 C.F.R. pt. 77).

¹⁷ Conference of Chief Justices, Comment Letter on Proposed Rule for the Review of State Bar Complaints and Allegations Against Department of Justice Attorneys (Mar. 24, 2026), <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/DOJ-OAG-2026-0001-36670>.

10. Outstanding Freedom of Information Act Requests.

Faced with near-total obstruction from DOJ, two of my colleagues and I have been forced to file FOIA requests related to our outstanding oversight and other topics. Given Congress's inherent constitutional oversight authority, no Member of Congress should ever have to resort to FOIA requests to receive basic information from the executive branch. Yet even here DOJ has stonewalled our inquiries.

Senator Blumenthal, Senator Schiff, and I have submitted requests related to the now-closed investigation of Tom Homan; any Office of Professional Responsibility investigation into former DOJ official Emil Bove; Director Patel's still-undisclosed and immunized grand jury testimony; suspicious activity reports related to Jeffrey Epstein and his associates; DOJ's White House contacts policy; DOJ's disbanding of anti-kleptocracy initiatives; DOJ's attempt to rescind obligated money under the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund; investigations into threats against judges spurred by Elon Musk and Laura Loomer; BOP's transfer of Ghislaine Maxwell; DOJ's hiring of Jared Wise; DOJ's meritless ethics complaint against Chief Judge Boasberg; communications between DOJ political appointees and Trump-appointed judges who have thwarted contempt inquiries involving DOJ; and President Trump's acceptance of a Qatari jet plane.

Nearly seven months have passed since we submitted these requests. DOJ has failed to respond to most of our requests, in violation of the 20-day requirement imposed by the FOIA statute.¹⁸ That failure is unacceptable in any case, but it is especially egregious when responding to Members of Congress and when delays are likely caused at least partly by DOJ actions that led to a "significant decrease in staffing."¹⁹

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¹⁸ 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(A).

¹⁹ *United States Department of Justice 2026 Chief FOIA Officer Report*, U.S. DEP'T OF JUST. OFF. OF INFO. POL'Y, <https://www.justice.gov/oip/united-states-department-justice-2026-chief-foia-officer-report-0>; Shifra Dayak, *The Trump Administration Is Dismantling FOIA*, NOTUS (Apr. 27, 2026), <https://www.notus.org/trump-white-house/trump-administration-dismantling-foia> (noting this administration's firing of Bobak Talebian, the head of DOJ's Office of Information Policy, which handles FOIA requests, and that the DOJ Executive Office of Immigration Review's FOIA Office "was down to just two employees at one point").

I look forward to your prompt resolution of these requests before your confirmation hearing. Considering some of these requests were submitted more than a year ago, I am eager to avoid any further delay.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sheldon Whitehouse", with a stylized, cursive script.

Sheldon Whitehouse
Ranking Member,
Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on
Federal Courts, Oversight,
Agency Action, and
Federal Rights