

September 15, 2025

The Honorable Pam Bondi
Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20530

The Honorable Kash Patel
Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation
935 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Bondi and Director Patel,

Over the past eight months, as we have observed this Administration's sweeping staff cuts, personnel reassignments, and supposed restructuring across federal law enforcement agencies, we have grown increasingly concerned that federal law enforcement's ability to protect our nation and its people has been significantly undermined. As the international landscape grows ever-more perilous, we are deeply concerned that we are increasingly unprepared and unprotected against the myriad threats facing our country.

We have repeatedly raised concerns about the steady stream of personnel cuts and reassignments across federal law enforcement agencies in recent months.¹ In March of this year, agents and intelligence analysts were transferred out of the FBI's Domestic Terrorism Operations Section, which supports domestic terror investigations at the Bureau's fifty-five field offices.² Moreover, agents across the Bureau, including those assigned to the Joint Terrorism Task Forces responsible for investigating both domestic and international terrorist threats, were reassigned from their duties to assist in the President's immigration crackdown.³ On its first day in office, this Administration reassigned more than a dozen senior career officials in the Department of

¹ Letter from Senate Judiciary Democrats to Acting Attorney General James McHenry, U.S. Department of Justice, and Acting Director Brian Driscoll, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Feb. 3, 2025, *available at* <https://www.durbin.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/durbin-leads-all-senate-judiciary-committee-democrats-in-letters-demanding-answers-from-fbi-doj-nominees-acting-attorney-general-and-acting-fbi-director-on-trump-administration-forcing-out-doj-and-fbi-officials>; Letter from Senate Judiciary Democrats to Attorney General Pam Bondi, U.S. Department of Justice, Mar. 3, 2025, *available at* <https://www.durbin.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/durbin-senate-judiciary-democrats-press-justice-department-on-diversion-of-law-enforcement-to-purported-immigration-enforcement-initiative#:~:text=The%20Senators%20conclude%20with%20a,General%20Pam%20Bondi%2C%20click%20here.>; Letter from Sen. Richard J. Durbin to Secretary Kristi Noem, Department of Homeland Security, and Director Kash Patel, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Apr. 8, 2025, *available at* <https://www.durbin.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/durbin-pushes-dhs-secretary-noem-fbi-director-patel-to-reverse-course-on-cuts-to-domestic-terrorism-prevention-efforts#:~:text=A%20diversion%20of%20domestic%20terrorism,Director%20Patel%20is%20available%20here>; Letter from Sen. Richard J. Durbin to Acting Inspector General William Blier, U.S. Department of Justice, Aug. 14, 2025, *available at* <https://www.durbin.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/durbin-demands-the-acting-inspector-general-investigate-the-trump-administrations-purging-of-fbi-officials>.

² Andrew Goudsward and Sarah N. Lynch, *Exclusive: FBI scales back staffing, tracking of domestic terrorism probes, sources say*, REUTERS, Mar. 21, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/fbi-scales-back-staffing-tracking-domestic-terrorism-probes-sources-say-2025-03-21/>; *see also* Letter from Sen. Durbin to Sec. Noem and Dir. Patel, *supra* note 1.

³ Goudsward and Lynch, *supra* note 2.

Justice's ("DOJ") National Security and Criminal Divisions, depriving those divisions of critical experience and leadership.⁴ Recent reporting has revealed that arbitrary removals, forced retirements, and reassignments have impacted at least 18 of 53 Special Agents in Charge of FBI Field Offices as well as numerous other supervisory personnel in at least nine field offices.⁵ There are reported gaps in staffing at cybersecurity units both within and outside the Bureau.⁶ And last month, in a transparent act of political retaliation, the Assistant Director of the Critical Incident Response Group—who had served as Acting Director and resisted the Administration's earlier retaliatory efforts against agents involved in January 6th cases—was forced out of the Bureau alongside several other senior agents, an action that has now prompted litigation.⁷

This Administration's assault on federal law enforcement is not just limited to personnel actions. DOJ is considering a plan to merge the DEA and the ATF.⁸ The President's 2026 budget proposal calls for dramatic funding reductions for the FBI, DEA, and ATF alike—under the 2026 proposal, the FBI's budget would be slashed by \$545 million and the DEA and ATF would face cuts of \$100 million and \$425 million, respectively.⁹

Moreover, reporting has revealed that Director Patel is taking action to transform the Bureau from the nation's premier defense against terrorism and espionage into a national police force focused on local crime. All agents will now be expected to spend time investigating violent crime at the expense of critical missions the Bureau has historically undertaken, such as combatting terrorism in the 9/11, Unabomber, and Boston Marathon bombing investigations, fighting political corruption, and pursuing white collar crime in the Bernie Madoff and Enron investigations.¹⁰ Yet even as Bureau leadership is instructing its agents to investigate local offenses and detailing agents away from core missions, it plans to cut around fifteen percent of its workforce, or 5,800 employees.¹¹ And, just last month, reporting revealed that Director Patel now plans to reduce recruitment standards for FBI agents, in part to make up for these cuts, further calling into question the Bureau's capacity to handle its critical national security mission going forward and the reasons for and wisdom of the cuts in the first place.¹²

⁴ Perry Stein and Ellen Nakashima, *Justice Dept. removes senior career officials from key positions*, WASH. POST, Jan. 21, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/01/21/justice-trump-removes-senior-staffers-national-security-criminal/>.

⁵ Ken Dilanian, *High-Ranking FBI Job Losses Disproportionately Hurt Women, People of Color*, MSBNC, Aug. 5, 2025, <https://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/amp/rcna222988>.

⁶ Joseph Marks, *Government layoffs are making us less safe in cyberspace, experts fear*, NEXTGOV/FCW, July 31, 2025, <https://www.nextgov.com/cybersecurity/2025/07/government-layoffs-are-making-us-less-safe-cyberspace-experts-fear/407074/>.

⁷ Adam Goldman et al., *Senior Agent Who Helped Oversee F.B.I.'s Response to Jan. 6 Is Fired*, THE NEW YORK TIMES, Aug. 7, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/07/us/politics/trump-fbi.html>; Carrie Johnson, *Fired FBI Agents Allege Retribution, Incompetence at Top Security Agency*, NPR, Sept. 10, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/09/10/g-s1-87947/fbi-lawsuit-firing-retribution>.

⁸ Sarah N. Lynch and Brad Heath, *US Justice Dept takes next steps to merge ATF and DEA, sources say*, REUTERS, May 16, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-justice-dept-takes-next-steps-merge-atf-dea-sources-say-2025-05-16/>.

⁹ Sarah N. Lynch, *White House seeks budget cuts for Justice Department law enforcement offices, sources say*, REUTERS, May 2, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/white-house-seeks-budget-cuts-justice-department-law-enforcement-offices-sources-2025-05-02/>.

¹⁰ Ken Dilanian, X Post, Aug. 15, 2025, available at <https://x.com/DilanianMSNBC/status/1956419245962858650>.

¹¹ *Id.*

Director Patel is not merely attempting to transform the Bureau into a police force, but also into a force of loyalists. While the Bureau has long used polygraph tests in assessments for security clearances and in its investigations into alleged treason and disclosure of confidential information, it is now reportedly weaponizing them to test its own employees' loyalty.¹³ Specifically, the FBI has allegedly asked senior employees, both during polygraph tests and not, whether they have ever said anything negative about Director Patel.¹⁴ The use of polygraph tests to assess employees' feelings about the FBI Director represents a dangerous escalation in the Administration's attempt to remake the Bureau into an office of sycophants with allegiance to the President over the law.

It defies credulity to believe that, amidst these cuts, policy changes, and overall turmoil, our law enforcement agencies' ability to protect our country has not been impacted. Accordingly, and in furtherance of our oversight responsibilities as a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, we request that you provide answers to the following questions by September 29, 2025.

1. Since January 20, 2025, how many employees have been transferred out of the FBI's Domestic Terrorism Operations Section?
 - a. Where were they transferred?
 - b. What was the funded staffing level of the Domestic Terrorism Operations Section on January 19, 2025?
 - c. What is the funded staffing level of Domestic Terrorism Operations Section today?
2. Since January 20, 2025, how many employees have been reassigned, detailed, transferred or otherwise had their primary role or mission changed, on a permanent or temporary basis, from Joint Terrorism Task Forces to immigration enforcement?
3. Since January 20, 2025, how many employees from the FBI's field offices have been reassigned, detailed, transferred, or otherwise had their primary role or mission changed, on a permanent or temporary basis, from combatting domestic terrorism? Please provide a breakdown by field office.
4. Since January 20, 2025, how many employees in the FBI's Headquarters Operational Divisions have been reassigned, detailed, transferred, or otherwise had their primary role or mission changed, on a permanent or temporary basis, from combatting domestic terrorism? Please provide a breakdown by division.

¹² Devlin Barrett and Adam Goldman, *F.B.I. Plans to Lower Recruiting Standards, Alarming Agents*, NEW YORK TIMES, Aug. 21, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/21/us/politics/fbi-agent-recruitment-requirements-trump.html>.

¹³ Adam Goldman, *The F.B.I. Is Using Polygraphs to Test Officials' Loyalty*, THE NEW YORK TIMES, July 10, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/10/us/politics/fbi-polygraph-kash-patel.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare>.

¹⁴ *Id.*

5. Since January 20, 2025, how many employees from the FBI's field offices have been reassigned, detailed, transferred, or otherwise had their primary role or mission changed, on a permanent or temporary basis, to immigration enforcement? Please provide a breakdown by field office.

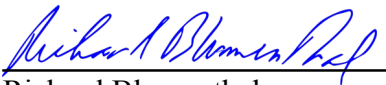
Since January 20, 2025, how many employees in the FBI's Headquarters Operational Divisions have been reassigned, detailed, transferred, or otherwise had their primary role or mission changed, on a permanent or temporary basis, to immigration enforcement? Please provide a breakdown by division.

6. For each of the preceding five questions, how many of the transferred employees were:
 - a. Special agents?
 - b. Intelligence analysts?
7. How many federal agents employed by the Department of Justice have been assigned to patrol the streets of Washington, D.C.? Please provide a breakdown by component or agency.
 - a. How many were reassigned or otherwise had their primary role or mission changed, on a permanent or temporary basis, from counterterrorism or counterespionage to this mission? Please provide a breakdown by component or agency.
8. How is Director Patel's reported refocusing of the Bureau on violent crime being implemented?
 - a. Will the FBI establish new offices, bureaus, or divisions?
 - b. How many agents are being reassigned?
 - c. How many agent hours are being redirected away from the Bureau's national security-focused missions to violent crime that would otherwise be handled by state and local law enforcement?
9. How many of the 5,800 FBI employees slated for downsizing are agents?
 - a. How many work on counterterrorism or counterespionage investigations?
10. How many employees have been administered a polygraph test since Director Patel was confirmed on February 20, 2025?
 - a. How many of those tests were conducted for a reason other than a security clearance or an investigation into potential treason or disclosure of sensitive or confidential information?

- b. How many employees have been asked questions about Director Patel during a polygraph test?
11. How are the questions used in a polygraph test of an employee selected? Who is involved in writing the questions?
12. Please provide the exact wording of any questions asked of employees during polygraph tests that reference or relate to Director Patel.
- a. For each question, please provide the number of times asked, the title of those employees asked it, and the date it was asked.

We look forward to your prompt attention to these important requests. The safety of our country and its people is of the utmost importance.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator