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May 18, 2026

The Honorable William Blier
Deputy Inspector General Performing the Duties of Inspector General
Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Deputy Inspector General Blier,

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI or the Bureau) is our nation's premier federal law enforcement agency. We rely on the Bureau both to prevent crime before it happens and to investigate crime that has already occurred. Recent reporting, however, suggests that the Bureau's own director is both a risk to the FBI's ability to protect this country and manipulating statistics about arrests and fugitive captures.

Last month, The Atlantic reported that Director Kash Patel's alleged excessive drinking and unexplained absences have interfered with his job performance, including rendering him unavailable to respond to emerging threats.[1] Members of his security detail reportedly have had difficulty waking him because of his apparent intoxication. On one occasion, they even reportedly made a request for SWAT-style "breaching equipment" because Patel was unresponsive behind locked doors. Moreover, the reporting indicates that Patel's attendance at the office has been inconsistent—causing delays in decision-making in ongoing investigations. And his tenure has been marked with reporting about his alleged broader inattentiveness and focus on the perks, rather than the substance, of the job. He attended the men's hockey gold medal game at the Milan Olympics and a "VIP snorkel" tour at the Pearl Harbor memorial—swimming next to the U.S.S. Arizona, which holds the remains of more than 900 Navy sailors and Marines who died at Pearl Harbor—both on purported work travel.[2] Ahead of an international intelligence conference, he reportedly focused on setting up a helicopter tour and jet skiing rather than in-office meetings with allies.[3]

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[1] Sarah Fitzpatrick, *The FBI Director is MIA*, THE ATLANTIC, Apr. 17, 2026, https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/2026/04/kash-patel-fbi-director-drinking-absences/686839/.
[2] *Id.*; Jim Mustian, Eric Tucker, & Michael Biesecker, *Emails show FBI Director Kash Patel's Hawaii trip included 'VIP snorkel' at a Pearl Harbor memorial*, AP, May 14, 2026, https://apnews.com/article/fbi-kash-patel-snorkel-hawaii-pearl-harbor-192a81cde7a5879aab747bc0ba4b78b9.
[3] Emily Bazelon & Rachel Poser, *A Year Inside Kash Patel's F.B.I.*, THE NEW YORK TIMES, Jan. 22, 2026, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2026/01/22/magazine/trump-kash-patel-fbi-agents.html.

The role of FBI Director is not a part-time job. The Director must be on call and ready to perform at all hours. We are fortunate that a terror attack, mass shooting, or assassination did not occur while Patel was intoxicated or unreachable—but these allegations leave me deeply concerned about his ability to continue serving in the role.

Moreover, last week, MS NOW reported that Patel has artificially inflated the Bureau's arrest statistics and manipulated the FBI's Most Wanted list to expand the appearance of accomplishments.[4] He reportedly imposed new policies that change the way the Bureau catalogs arrests that make arrests appear to have increased, but failed to clarify those changes before publicly touting the FBI's arrest record under his tenure. The Bureau also reportedly manipulated its Most Wanted list to add fugitives mere days or even just hours before their anticipated capture —creating a false impression of steady progress on that list and of Patel's leadership.

Accuracy around crime and arrest data allows us to get a clear picture of what is happening on our streets and in our neighborhoods. The Most Wanted list is a tool to focus agent and public attention on dangerous, at-large criminals. Manipulation of either to improve the reputation of a struggling FBI Director is unacceptable and cuts against the FBI's mission to ensure public safety.

In light of recent reporting, I request that the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General investigate both (1) the allegations that Director Patel's excessive drinking has interfered with his ability to perform his role and, coupled with his broader inattentiveness, had a negative impact on the FBI's readiness and public safety; and (2) the allegations that Director Patel is manipulating both arrest statistics and the FBI's Most Wanted list. I appreciate your attention to this important request.

Sincerely,

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

[4] Carol Leonnig & Ken Dilanian, *FBI insiders: Kash Patel is 'padding the stats' to boost his record of arrests*, MS NOW, May 13, 2026, https://www.ms.now/news/fbi-insiders-kash-patel-is-padding-the-stats-to-boost-his-record-of-arrests.