

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

October 29, 2025

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

Dear Attorney General Bondi:

President Trump has two administrative claims pending before the Department of Justice (DOJ), for which he is seeking approximately \$230 million dollars of taxpayer money.¹ In these claims, President Trump has alleged his rights were violated during the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) investigation into his 2016 campaign's ties to Russia and during the course of his investigation and prosecution for allegedly mishandling hundreds of pages of classified documents. This is yet another attempt by President Trump to weaponize his position of power for personal financial gain at the expense of American taxpayers.

Setting aside the lack of merit in President Trump's claims, there is an inescapable conflict of interest in Trump Administration officials assessing these claims while serving at the President's pleasure. Moreover, the officials who have the authority to approve such a settlement pursuant to DOJ regulations²—Deputy Attorney General (AG) Todd Blanche and Associate AG Stanley Woodward—have an even more acute conflict of interest because they defended President Trump and his co-defendant, respectively, in the classified documents case.³

When asked by *ABC News* whether Deputy AG Blanche or Associate AG Woodward would consider recusing themselves, a DOJ spokesperson provided this response: "In any circumstance, all officials at the Department of Justice follow the guidance of career ethics officials."⁴ However, as you know, the Trump Administration removed the senior career DOJ ethics officials who would provide this critical guidance and placed their duties in the hands of inexperienced political appointees who are beholden to you for their positions,⁵ an outrage we have repeatedly asked you to address to since February.⁶ Compounding this irresponsible move was the termination of Joseph W. Tirrell, the Director of DOJ's Departmental Ethics Office, which

¹ Devlin Barrett & Tyler Pager, *Trump Said to Demand Justice Dept. Pay Him \$230 Million For Past Cases*, N.Y. TIMES (Oct. 21, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/21/us/politics/trump-justice-department-compensation.html>.

² See Justice Manual, 4-3.110. See also *id.* at 4-5.230.

³ Hannah Rabinowitz, Katelyn & Evan Perez, *What We Know About Trump's Bid to Claim \$230 Million From His Own Justice Department*, CNN (Oct. 22, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/10/22/politics/trump-doj-request-230-mil-explained>.

⁴ Alexander Mallin & Katherine Faulders, *Here's What Trump Has Said About Seeking \$230M Settlement From DOJ*, ABC NEWS (Oct. 22, 2025), <https://abcnews.go.com/US/trump-seeking-230m-settlement-doj/story?id=126772259>.

⁵ Ben Penn, *Trump DOJ Assigns Sensitive Ethics Power to Political Aides*, BLOOMBERG L. (Feb. 16, 2025), <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/us-law-week/trump-doj-delegates-sensitive-ethics-powers-to-political-aides>; Sarah N. Lynch, *US Justice Department Senior Career Ethics Officials Removed from Post, source says*, REUTERS (Jan. 27, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-justice-department-senior-career-ethics-official-removed-post-source-says-2025-01-27>.

provides advice on conflicts of interest, financial disclosures, and recusals to senior political appointees at DOJ, such as Deputy AG Blanche, Associate AG Woodward, and yourself.⁷ You have failed to address Committee questions regarding this indefensible episode for over three months now.⁸ This followed the removal of another Department guardrail—the firing of the Director of the Office of Professional Responsibility, Jeffrey Ragsdale, who was the senior official of the office responsible for investigating DOJ attorney misconduct.⁹

The American people deserve to understand how political appointees of the President whose claims they are assessing, including an appointee who previously defended the President in one of the matters at issue, can ethically assess the merits of his claims. To that end, we request that you provide the following by November 12, 2025:

1. A thorough description of the process by which President Trump's claims will be assessed, including a list of all the offices and officials involved.
2. A thorough description of the process by which all officials with any role in this matter will seek guidance on potential conflicts of interest and other ethical issues that may warrant recusal, including a list of all the offices and officials involved in providing such guidance.
3. Records relating to all communications between and among Department of Justice officials and White House officials concerning the submission and adjudication of these claims.

As the American people grapple with the impacts of the Republican government shutdown, President Trump's attempt to exploit the Justice Department and profit from taxpayer dollars cannot be overlooked. We look forward to your full and immediate compliance with this request.

Sincerely,

⁶ See Letter from Sen. Durbin et al. to Attorney General Bondi (Feb. 20, 2025), available at <https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-02-20%20SJC%20Dems%20Letter%20to%20DOJ%20re%20Ethics.pdf>.

⁷ Hannah Rabinowitz, *Justice Department Ethics Chief Says He Was Fired*, CNN (Jul. 14, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/07/14/politics/justice-department-ethics-official-fired>.

⁸ See Letter from Sen. Schiff et al. to Attorney General Bondi (Jul. 16, 2025), available at <https://www.schiff.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/2025.07.16-Letter-to-DOJ-on-Departmental-Ethics-Office-Director-Firing.pdf>.

⁹ Perry Stein et al., *Several Top Career Officials Ousted At Justice Department*, WASH. POST (Mar. 7, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/03/07/justice-department-trump-firings>; U.S. Dep't of Justice, Staff Profile: Former Director and Chief Counsel Jeffrey Ragsdale (Mar. 17, 2025), <https://www.justice.gov/archives/opr/former-director-and-chief-counsel-ragsdale>.



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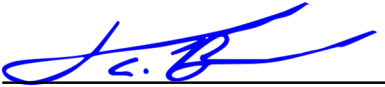
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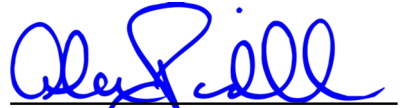
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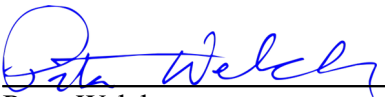
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United States Senator



Alex Padilla
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Peter Welch
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator

cc: The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary