

**Remarks Prepared for Delivery by Christopher A. Wray
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Introduction

Good afternoon Chairman Grassley, Ranking Member Feinstein, and members of the Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to discuss the FBI's response to the report by the Justice Department's Office of Inspector General on DOJ and FBI activities in the run-up to the 2016 election. I take the report very seriously, and we accept its findings and recommendations. We're already addressing those recommendations, and are determined to emerge from this experience better and wiser.

Importance of Oversight

The FBI's mission is to protect the American people and uphold the Constitution. With this mission, we're entrusted with a lot of authority, so our actions are subject to close oversight — from Congress, from the courts, and from independent entities like the Inspector General. That oversight makes the FBI stronger as an organization — and it makes the public more safe. So I appreciate the IG's work in conducting this important review. Although the report did not find any evidence of political bias or improper consideration actually *impacting* the investigation under review, the report *did* identify errors of judgment, violations of or disregard for policy, and decisions that, at the very least, in hindsight, were not the best choices.

FBI Actions in Response to IG Report

I'd like to very briefly summarize the steps we've already started taking to address the report's findings and recommendations.

First: We are going to hold employees accountable for any potential misconduct. We have referred conduct highlighted in the report to the Office of Professional Responsibility, or OPR, the FBI's independent disciplinary office. We are going to adhere to the appropriate disciplinary process — fairly but without delay. Once that process is complete, we will not hesitate to hold people strictly accountable for their actions.

Second: We're going to make sure that every FBI employee understands the lessons of this report through in-depth training — first of our executives, and then of every FBI employee — so we do not repeat mistakes identified in the report.

Third: We're going to make sure we have the policies, procedures, and training needed for everyone to understand and remember what's expected of us. That includes:

- Drilling home the importance of objectivity — and of avoiding even the

appearance of personal conflicts or political bias in our work;

- Ensuring that recusals are handled correctly and effectively — and are clearly communicated to the appropriate people;
- Making all employees fully aware of our new policy on contacts with the news media, which I issued last November — and making clear that we will not tolerate non-compliance;
- Ensuring that we follow all DOJ policies about public statements on ongoing investigations and uncharged conduct; and
- Ensuring that our employees adhere strictly to all policies and procedures on the use of FBI systems, networks, and devices.

In addition, I've also directed our Associate Deputy Director to lead a focused review of how the FBI handles particularly sensitive investigations, so that every sensitive investigation is conducted to the FBI's highest standards.

Looking Forward

The OIG report makes clear that we have some important work to do. As I said, we are going to learn from the report and be better as a result.

At the same time, I want to emphasize that this report is focused on a specific set of events back in 2016, and a small number of FBI employees connected with those events. Mistakes made by those employees do not define our 37,000 men and women and the great work they do every day. Nothing in the report impugns the integrity of our workforce as a whole, or the FBI as an institution.

I want to be very clear about the FBI that I have seen up close in the past 10 months since my confirmation hearing before this committee. I've met with employees in every Headquarters Division and in 31 FBI field offices around the country, and I've visited a number of LEGAT offices overseas. Again and again, I hear remarkable stories — frankly, inspiring stories, and that's not a word I use lightly — of the work the FBI's men and women are doing to protect the American people and uphold the Constitution.

This year alone, we've rescued 1,305 kids from child predators — some as young as seven months old.

We've arrested more than 4,600 violent gang members in just the past several months.

In the past several months, we've disrupted terrorist plots from Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco to a crowded shopping mall in Miami.

We deployed more than 600 FBI folks from around the country in the recent investigation of the package bombs in Austin.

Our FBI Lab has closed thousands of cases through fingerprint identification and DNA analysis.

I could go on and on. The FBI's men and women are doing all this work with the unfailing fidelity to our Constitution and laws that it demands ... the bravery that it deserves... and the integrity that the American people rightly expect.

As I've been saying since my confirmation hearing here last July, I'm committed to doing this job, in every respect, by the book, and I expect all our employees to do the same. I am a big believer in process — that our brand over 110 years is based less on our many successes than on the way we earned them. Following our rules ... following the law ... following our guidelines.

There will inevitably be times when we feel extraordinary pressure to not follow our process and policies, but those are precisely the times when we need to adhere to them the most. We've got to stay faithful to our core values and best traditions. Trying to make sure we're not only doing the right thing, but doing it in the right way. And pursuing the facts independently and objectively, no matter who likes it. That's the best way — the only way — to maintain trust and credibility with the American people we serve.

Conclusion

Chairman Grassley, Ranking Member Feinstein, and Committee members, thank you again for the opportunity to address the Inspector General's report. I look forward to answering the Committee's questions.

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