

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 8, 2026

The Honorable Todd Blanche
Acting Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Acting Attorney General Blanche:

We write regarding the Department of Justice's (DOJ or Department) decision to remove the *Federal Prosecution of Election Offenses* manual, now in its eighth edition, from the Department's website without explanation.

In the context of other alarming actions taken by the Trump Administration's Department of Justice, including pursuing politically-motivated investigations at the direction of the White House;¹ implementing drastic changes to the longstanding mission of the Civil Rights Division's Voting Section;² suing 30 states for unrestricted access to their voter rolls;³ and making unprecedented demands for ballots,⁴ election equipment, and names of election workers,⁵ the removal of this manual continues to raise the alarm about DOJ's involvement in the upcoming midterm elections for partisan political purposes. We urge you to confirm the Department's adherence to the principles outlined in the manual and be transparent about what, if any, changes the Department is making to this longstanding policy to protect elections from political interference.

The manual published by the Public Integrity Section of the Criminal Division has been easily publicly accessible on the Department's Election Crimes Branch website in both Democratic and Republican Administrations. During President Trump's first term, the manual was accompanied by a memorandum describing the Department's longstanding election non-interference policy.⁶ While the manual underscores the importance of deterrence as the objective served by federal

¹ See Peter Charalambous, Benjamin Siegel, Alexander Mallin, Katherine Faulders, and Elizabeth Schulze, *Here's a list of the individuals, including James Comey, targeted by the Trump administration*, ABC News (Apr. 28, 2026), <https://abcnews.com/US/list-individuals-including-lisa-cook-targeted-trump-administration/story?id=124968309>.

² Sam Levine, *Trump ally pushes DoJ unit to shift civil rights focus, new messages show*, The Guardian (Apr. 18, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/apr/18/justice-department-civil-rights-division-trump>.

³ See, Kaylie Martinez-Ochoa, et al., *Tracker of Justice Department Request for Voter Information*, Brennan Center for Justice (updated May 22, 2026), <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/tracker-justice-department-requests-voter-information>.

⁴ Mary Corey, *Michigan officials denounce DOJ demand for Wayne County's 2024 election records*, Michigan Public (Apr. 20, 2026), <https://www.michiganpublic.org/politics-government/2026-04-20/michigan-officials-denounce-doj-demand-for-wayne-countys-2024-election-records>.

⁵ Kate Brumback, *Justice Department seeks the names of 2020 election workers in Georgia's Fulton County*, AP (May 5, 2026), <https://apnews.com/article/2020-georgia-election-worker-names-trump-2c4bc764855341a0c9eedb135d25591e>.

⁶ Memorandum from Corey R. Amundson to Attorney General Advisory Committee regarding Summary of Significant Election Related Policies ("Amundson Memorandum"), Aug. 20, 2020, available at [amundson-memo-august-20-2020.pdf](https://www.amundson-memo-august-20-2020.pdf).

prosecutions of individuals who commit federal crimes in connection with an election, it also makes clear that “this deterrence is achieved by public awareness of the Department’s prosecutive interest in, and prosecution of, election fraud—*not through interference with the process itself*.”⁷ The Amundson Memo similarly provides clear directives reaffirming guidance provided under former Attorney General William Barr that prosecutors and investigators “may never select the timing of public statements (attributed or not), investigative steps, criminal charges, or any other action in any matter or case for the purpose of affecting any election, or for the purpose of giving an advantage or disadvantage to any candidate or political party.”⁸

The manual is also still cited in the Justice Manual, a critical reference guide for U.S. Attorneys and other DOJ prosecutors, which states:

Where a criminal or national security investigation during an election cycle is at issue, the Department must also be careful to adhere to longstanding policies regarding the timing of charges or taking overt investigative steps. *See, e.g., U.S. Dept. of Justice, Federal Prosecution of Election Offenses 8-9, 84–85 (8th ed. 2017).*⁹

Recent reports have indicated that the number of attorneys in DOJ’s Public Integrity Section has been reduced from 36 to two.¹⁰ In addition, in early April, former Republican congressman Dan Bishop was appointed as the Department’s chief election fraud prosecutor with nationwide authority to pursue the President’s debunked claims of widespread voting fraud.¹¹ Around that same time, you hired 2020 election conspiracist Joe DiGenova as Counsel to pursue politically motivated prosecutions, who has in turn apparently hired Kurt Olsen, a former White House election czar previously sanctioned for misleading courts in election cases.¹²

Following these developments, we need to better understand the extent to which the Department’s investigations are being influenced by partisan political motives. Given Department leadership’s public enthusiasm for working with Republicans in Congress on issues related to elections, including agreeing to demands that DOJ bring legal action to force states to

⁷ *Federal Prosecution of Election Offenses*, at 8 (Richard C. Pilger ed., 8th ed. 2017) (emphasis added), available at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GOVPUB-J-PURL-gpo145659/pdf/GOVPUB-J-PURL-gpo145659.pdf>.

⁸ *See* Amundson Memorandum at 3 (quoting Attorney General William Barr, Election Year Sensitivities Memorandum for All Department of Justice Employees, May 15, 2020).

⁹ U.S. Dep’t of Justice, *Justice Manual*, § 9-90.730 (2022), available at <https://www.justice.gov/jm/jm-9-90000-national-security>.

¹⁰ ProPublica, *8 Things You Should Know About Trump’s Effort to “Take Over” the Midterm Elections* (May 1, 2026), <https://www.propublica.org/article/trump-midterm-elections-takeover-takeaways>.

¹¹ Alan Feur and Nick Corasaniti, *Trump Loyalist Leads Administration’s Hunt for Fraud in Elections*, New York Times (May 15, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/05/15/us/dan-bishop-election-fraud-trump.html>.

¹² *See, e.g.,* Ben Penn, *Trump Lawyer diGenova to Lead Miami Grand Conspiracy Probe*, Bloomberg Law (Apr. 18, 2026), <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/us-law-week/trump-lawyer-digenova-to-take-over-miami-grand-conspiracy-probe>; *see also*, U.S. Attorney Jason Reding Quiñones [@USAReding], May 19, 2026, x.com, <https://x.com/USAReding/status/2056831148899041599>.

redraw congressional lines, even after citizens in their states have already voted,¹³ we expect complete answers to the following straightforward questions:

- (1) Why was the most recent edition of the *Federal Prosecution of Election Offenses* manual taken down? Will you commit to restoring it to the DOJ website?
- (2) If withdrawn for revisions, what revisions are being contemplated? Who at the Department is leading that process? What is the estimated date of completion?
- (3) Has any DOJ employee, political appointee, or contractor involved in revising the *Federal Prosecution of Election Offenses* manual met with, including in a “personal capacity,” White House political staff, former White House political staff, Republican party officials, or outside organizations that work on election policy? If so, which ones, for which purposes?
- (4) The *Federal Prosecution of Election Offenses* manual reaffirmed that “the federal prosecutor has no authority to send FBI Special Agents or Deputy U.S. Marshals to polling places,” and that “Department and FBI policy requires that any investigative action that involves intrusion by federal investigators into the area immediately surrounding an open polling place be approved by the Criminal Division’s Public Integrity Section.”¹⁴ Will the Public Integrity Section still have a role in reviewing any potential deployment of the FBI or U.S. Marshals to areas immediately surrounding polling locations in the upcoming midterm elections? If not, who at the Department will have a role in reviewing such deployments and under what standards?

While the Department’s ongoing voter roll lawsuits are failing across the country,¹⁵ we are concerned that those efforts, which were calculated to compel states into inaccurately purging voters, may be the pretext for more meritless pre- and post-election challenges, including interfering with election certification. Similarly, unsubstantiated claims by DOJ leadership of “tens of thousands” noncitizens on voter rolls¹⁶ are reckless, as time and again, those claims have been refuted by findings that many individuals are falsely identified as noncitizens, and the extremely rare appearance of noncitizen registrants on the voter rolls or the even more extremely rare cases of noncitizen voters are often due to bureaucratic errors or misunderstandings about eligibility, as opposed to intentional fraud.¹⁷

¹³ Harmeet Dhillon [@AAGDhillon], Apr. 30, 2026, x.com (“Senator [Schmitt] – we are ON IT! This @TheJusticeDept under @DAGToddBlanche continues to prioritize the equal protection of the laws for ALL Americans, be it in employment, housing, education – and VOTING!”), <https://x.com/AAGDhillon/status/2049963327116169424?s=20>.

¹⁴ *Federal Prosecution of Election Offenses*, at 9.

¹⁵ Melissa Quinn and Sarah N. Lynch, *Judge rejects Justice Department effort to get sensitive voter information from Rhode Island*, CBS News (Apr. 17, 2026) (“The dismissal of the case in Rhode Island marks the fifth loss for the Justice Department in its efforts to access state voter registration lists.”), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/judge-rejects-trump-admin-doj-effort-voter-information-rhode-island/>.

¹⁶ The Daily Signal, *DOJ’s Harmeet Dhillon Details Just How Much of a ‘Mess’ Voter Rolls Are* (Apr. 21, 2026), <https://libertyfirst.org/dojs-harmeet-dhillon-details-just-how-much-of-a-mess-voter-rolls-are/>.

¹⁷ See, Jen Field and Zach Despart, *A federal tool to check voter citizenship keeps making mistakes. It led to confusion in Texas*, The Texas Tribune (Feb. 13, 2026), <https://www.texastribune.org/2026/02/13/save-voter->

To be clear, any attempts by DOJ to file lawsuits to stop eligible voters from voting, their votes from being counted, or elections from being certified, will fail, but any attempts are still corrosive to public trust and confidence in our election administration and invite threats against nonpartisan election workers.

Against this backdrop, the absence of guidance from the Public Integrity Section on election noninterference appears to clear the way for politically-motivated legal actions by DOJ itself in the lead-up to and aftermath of the midterm elections. Accordingly, we request that you immediately confirm the Department's adherence to longstanding, bipartisan policy of noninterference and comply with this request no later than June 22, 2026.

Sincerely,



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



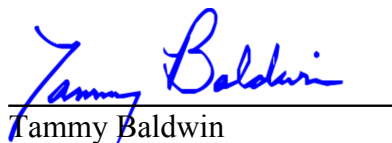
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



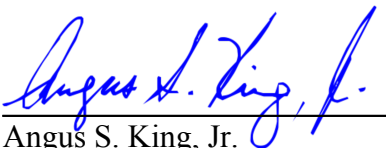
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



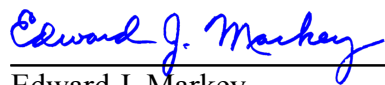
Lisa Blunt Rochester
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



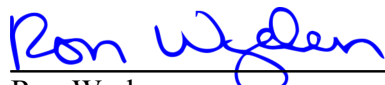
Angela D. Alsobrooks
United States Senator



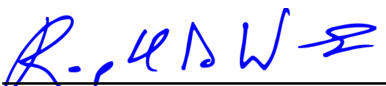
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Peter Welch
United States Senator



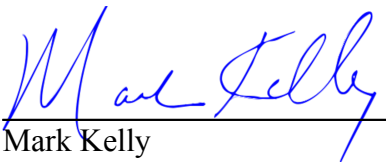
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator