

CONFIRMATION HEARING ON THE  
NOMINATION OF HON. PAMELA JO BONDI  
TO BE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
OF THE UNITED STATES

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HEARING  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY  
UNITED STATES SENATE  
ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS  
FIRST SESSION

JANUARY 15 and 16, 2025

**Serial No. J-119-1**

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U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

WASHINGTON : 2025

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# CONTENTS

## OPENING STATEMENTS

|   | Page |
|---|------|
| Grassley, Hon. Charles E.:                |      |
| January 15, 2025, opening statement ..... | 1    |
| January 16, 2025, opening statement ..... | 93   |
| Durbin, Hon. Richard J.:                  |      |
| January 15, 2025, opening statement ..... | 5    |
| January 16, 2025, opening statement ..... | 95   |
| Schmitt, Hon. Eric .....                  | 8    |

## VISITING INTRODUCER

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Scott, Hon. Rick, U.S. Senator from Florida ..... | 7 |
|---|---|

## NOMINEE

|                                      |     |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Bondi, Hon. Pamela Jo .....          | 9   |
| Prepared statement .....             | 124 |
| Questionnaire .....                  | 126 |
| Responses to written questions ..... | 160 |

## WITNESSES

|                                      |     |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Aronberg, Hon. Dave .....            | 97  |
| Prepared statement .....             | 293 |
| Cox, Nicholas B. ....                | 104 |
| Prepared statement .....             | 296 |
| Gainey, Hon. Emery .....             | 100 |
| Prepared statement .....             | 299 |
| Gilbert, Lisa .....                  | 99  |
| Prepared statement .....             | 305 |
| Responses to written questions ..... | 311 |
| McCord, Mary B. ....                 | 102 |
| Prepared statement .....             | 313 |

## APPENDIX

|                                      |     |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Items submitted for the record ..... | 323 |
|--------------------------------------|-----|



**CONFIRMATION HEARING ON THE  
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**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2025**

UNITED STATES SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,  
*Washington, DC.*

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:32 a.m., in Room 216, Hart Senate Office Building, Hon. Charles E. Grassley, Chairman of the Committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Grassley [presiding], Graham, Cornyn, Lee, Cruz, Hawley, Tillis, Kennedy, Blackburn, Schmitt, Britt, Crapo, Durbin, Whitehouse, Klobuchar, Coons, Blumenthal, Hirono, Booker, Padilla, Welch, and Schiff.

Also present: Senator Scott.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHARLES E. GRASSLEY,  
A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF IOWA**

Chairman GRASSLEY. Good morning, everybody. I welcome all of you to this very important hearing to consider the nomination of former Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi. She's serving as the 87th Attorney General of the United States after her approval. Congratulations to your nomination, Ms. Bondi, and thank you for your willingness to serve.

I thank Senator Durbin for his leadership as Chairman of the Committee over the last 4 years. Although he and I have differences of policies, I think the public could say we worked well together on many issues over the years. As he steps into his role as Ranking Member, I will work closely with Senator Durbin to serve the American people. I also would like to welcome three brand new Members of the Committee and a person that's repeating his service here after a stint off. I welcome to the Committee Senator Britt, Senator Schmitt, Senator Crapo, and Senator Schiff. Welcome.

[Applause.]

Chairman GRASSLEY. Before we get started, I'd like to set out a couple of ground rules. I want to handle this hearing using a similar structure to how Senator Durbin handled the nomination hearing of Attorney General Garland. I want everyone here to be able to watch the hearing without obstruction. If people stand up and block the view of those behind them or speak out of turn, it's not fair or considerate to others, so officers will immediately remove those individuals.

Now, before I turn to my opening statement, let me explain how we're going to proceed today. I'll give my opening remarks, and then I'll invite Ranking Member Durbin to give his opening remarks. Then I'll call on Senator Scott and Schmitt to introduce this nominee, and following those introductions and Ms. Bondi's statement, we'll begin the first round of questioning. Each Senator will have an initial 7-minute round for questioning. After the first round, we'll do a second, 4-minute round of questioning. Members should do their very best to adhere to these time limits so that we can proceed efficiently with the hearing.

We're here today considering Pam Bondi's nomination to serve as Attorney General of the United States. Ms. Bondi, for a second time, I thank you for your nomination, willingness to serve, but, more importantly, serve the important role of Senate's advise and consent process. You're nominated to one of the most important offices in our country. It took—let's see—a lot of work on your part just to get here today.

The more than 14,000 pages of records, hundreds of hours of media files, and more than 3,400 responsive entries you disclosed to this Committee are a testament to your long career in public eye and your cooperation with this Committee. I'd like to also thank your family for being here today. I know that many of them have traveled some distance to celebrate with you.

I'd like to explain and expect that Ms. Bondi be treated fairly. During Attorney General Garland's confirmation hearing, Republicans treated him with respect. We asked tough but fair questions, and we ultimately voted him out of Committee on a bipartisan basis. Although Attorney General Garland wasn't who we on this side of the aisle would've chosen to lead the Department of Justice, we recognized that President Biden won that election and that he was entitled to choose his Attorney General. We were ultimately disappointed with some of the things that General Garland and his Department did, but at the time of his nomination, we gave him the benefit of the doubt.

As the recent terrorist attacks in New Orleans and around the world have shown, our national security must be a high priority. The American people deserve a secure Homeland and borders, safe streets, orderly markets, civil rights, and a protected environment, so delivering on these promises require the swift confirmation of an Attorney General. This Committee should give Ms. Bondi the same benefit of the doubt that this Committee gave to Attorney General Garland.

President Trump has selected a nominee whose qualifications speak for themselves. Ms. Bondi made history in 2010 as the first woman to be elected Florida Attorney General. She held that role for 8 years and was comfortably reelected by the people of Florida to a second term. Eight years of service as Attorney General of the third-largest State in the Nation is excellent preparation for the role of U.S. Attorney General. As Florida Attorney General, Ms. Bondi was a member of the Florida Cabinet, chief legal officer of the State, and led a large agency that tangibly impacted people's lives, and by all accounts, Ms. Bondi handled her responsibilities well.

As the Florida Attorney General, Ms. Bondi achieved numerous successes. She engaged in key initiatives to fight human trafficking, counter the opioid epidemic, and protect consumers, and protect the citizens of Florida from violence. She didn't shy away from hard work or complicated problems. She engaged in an aggressive campaign to eliminate pill mills, took a leading role in securing a \$3-and-a-quarter billion settlement following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, and eliminated the backlog of rape test kits that had accumulated in that State's laboratories.

Ms. Bondi's experience isn't limited to her service as Florida Attorney General. She also served as a prosecutor in Hillsborough County for 18 years and prosecuted terrible crimes. She sought tough penalties and justice for victims of violent criminals, domestic abusers, and sexual predators. She prosecuted drug traffickers and, thus, protected her community. She was also active outside of her professional role, serving in the Junior League of Tampa, on the board of Special Olympics Florida, and is well known for her animal rescue efforts.

Her experience and performance as Attorney General, prosecutor, and community leader speaks volumes about her character and her dedication to the rule of law. She's received multiple letters in support of her nomination, including from the Fraternal Order of Police, the Republican State Attorneys General, more than 100 former senior DOJ officials, and a bipartisan group of former State Attorneys General. In short, Ms. Bondi is highly qualified, and, of course, as we all know, a change is desperately needed.

When confirmed, Ms. Bondi will take the helm at a very turbulent time for this country and for that Department. The Justice Department is infected with political decision-making while its leaders refuse to acknowledge that reality. Crossfire Hurricane was a textbook example of government weaponization.

The FBI's investigation was built on the fake Steele dossier, which was funded by the Democratic National Committee and Clinton campaign, who worked with foreign operatives. My investigative work exposed that the FBI actually knew the dossier was false information and was likely a part of a Russian disinformation campaign.

Even with the knowledge of such dossier defects and political infections, the Justice Department sought FISA warrant renewals and took other actions. After directing my oversight staff to investigate Justice Department's mishandling of the matter, the Justice Department retaliated in issuing a subpoena for my own staff's phone records—that's right—challenging my constitutional rights of doing my oversight duties.

What's next? Then a few Democratic colleagues pressured the FBI Foreign Influence Task Force to supposedly brief me and Senator Johnson related to our Biden family investigation. On August the 20th, Senator Johnson and I had that infamous briefing from the FBI. Later, this FBI's briefing contents were leaked to the media, even though the FBI promised confidentiality. That leak falsely labeled our oversight work as—you guessed it—Russian disinformation.

To this day, over 4 years later, the Intelligence Community and the FBI refuse to provide us the intelligence basis for that briefing.

The title of this Wall Street Journal's article sums it up, quote, "The FBI's Dubious Briefing: Did the Bureau Set Two U.S. GOP Senators Up at the Behest of Democrats?", end of quote. So I know, as other people on this Committee and in and out of Congress know, what government weaponization is.

And then we get to Special Counsel Jack Smith and his lawfare operation. It involved an unprecedented FBI raid on Trump's house, including agents that even searched the former First Lady's clothing drawers. Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden certainly did not receive the same treatment by Government regarding their records. Indeed, as my oversight exposed, the FBI amazingly agreed to destroy laptop and records associated with Clinton's staff. This "Orwellian conduct should have no quarter." On top of it all, the FBI Special Agent Thibault, the anti-Trump agent that violated the Hatch Act for political activities on the job, started one of Jack Smith's cases.

But Jack Smith wasn't the only Department official who tried to influence this past election. The Washington Post reported just last August about a previously undisclosed Mueller investigation into Trump that was closed for lack of evidence and it being, quote, unquote, "a fishing expedition." That news reporting was based on sealed court records, Government records, and potentially classified information roughly 90 days before the last Presidential election. The Justice Department leaked that information to the press to impact the election against President Trump, and they did it while stiff-arming congressional requests for information that would prove embarrassing to the Biden-Harris administration.

So let us not forget some of the more and other flagrant abuses of power that we've seen from the DOJ and the FBI over the last 4 years. And I don't have the time to spend on these that I spent on two or three others, but just to list them. The Department of Justice used the might of the Federal Government to prosecute individuals peacefully praying outside of an abortion clinic. The FBI suggested that traditional Catholics could be domestic terrorism threats, claiming that these individuals adhere to, quote, "antisemitic, anti-immigration, anti-GBT, and white supremacy ideology," end of quote. The FBI opened dozens of investigations into parents who voiced their concerns at school board meetings regarding curriculum choices and COVID-19 mandates. The FBI applied undue pressure to social media platforms to censor so-called misinformation, downgrading or removing flagged social media posts, and removing users. These are only a few particularly egregious examples of rot infesting the Department of Justice.

The impact to this political infection in our once-storied law enforcement institutions is catastrophic. By every metric, the Biden-Harris Justice Department conduct has failed to live up to our country's ideals. So, Ms. Bondi, should you be confirmed, the actions you take to change the Department's course must be for accountability so that the conduct I just described never happens again. The only way to accomplish this is through transparency for the Congress and the American people.

Now to my friend, Ranking Member Durbin.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD J. DURBIN,  
A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF ILLINOIS**

Senator DURBIN. Thank you, Senator Grassley. I appreciate your commitment to the Judiciary Committee's long-standing bipartisan practices for vetting Presidential nominees. That was in doubt several weeks ago, but I spoke to Senator Grassley, and he assured me that he's still personally committed, as I am, to maintaining these practices which we've established over the years. Our process is rigorous, and it shows how seriously Members on both sides of the aisle take our constitutional responsibility of advise and consent.

Ms. Bondi, thanks for coming to my office last week to discuss your nomination. The importance of the Attorney General to our justice system cannot be overstated. As our Nation's chief law enforcement officer, the Attorney General oversees the Department of Justice, which is responsible for protecting the civil rights of Americans, economic freedom and opportunity, public safety, and, of course, national security. In short, the Attorney General has real impact on America's everyday life.

It is critical that any nominee for this position be committed first and foremost to the Constitution and the American people, not any President or political agenda. But President Trump claims he has, quote, "an absolute right to do what he wants with the Justice Department," and that's how he conducted his first term.

[Poster is displayed.]

Senator DURBIN. He interfered with the criminal cases of his friends and allies and successfully pressured DOJ to investigate his rivals. He even tried to use the Justice Department to overturn the results of the 2020 Presidential election. The President-elect made it clear that he values one thing above all else, and he said it over and over again: loyalty.

Speaking about Attorney General Sessions, Donald Trump said, quote, "The only reason I gave him the job is because I felt loyalty. He was an original supporter." But when then-Attorney General Sessions did the right thing and recused himself from the Mueller investigation, Trump said he should never have nominated him. And he fired him. Trump then nominated Bill Barr to succeed Sessions. Barr successfully auditioned for the job in an unsolicited memo to DOJ that sharply criticized the Mueller investigation. Once confirmed, Barr misrepresented and blocked the release of the report, intervened in multiple criminal cases of Trump's political allies, and spread falsehoods about election fraud. But in December 2020, when Bill Barr finally announced there was no evidence of widespread voter fraud that would change the outcome of the election, Trump dismissed him—fired his second Attorney General.

This time around, President-elect Trump has vowed not just to use the Justice Department to advance his political interests, but also to seek, quote, "retribution" against, quote, "the enemy within." He has repeatedly threatened to arrest, prosecute, jail, and otherwise punish those he considers his enemies. This includes reporters, prosecutors, judges, poll workers, military officials, and even his own former political appointees. Even before taking office, Trump has forced out his own FBI Director that he appointed—

Chris Wray—and he’s trying to replace Wray with Kash Patel, whose main qualification to be FBI Director seems to be his loyalty to Donald Trump. Patel has even compiled an enemy’s list of, quote, “government gangsters” to target—that even includes former Trump appointees, like Director Wray, Attorney General Barr, and Defense Secretary Esper.

Trump’s approach is a stark contrast with the bipartisan view borne out of the post-Nixon era, that the Justice Department should serve the interests of the American people, not any one President. For those who need a reminder, Richard Nixon ordered Department officials to fire Archibald Cox, the Special Prosecutor investigating Watergate. Two of those officials—Elliot Richardson and William Ruckelshaus—resigned rather than carry out Richard Nixon’s orders.

When this Committee considered the appointment of Loretta Lynch to be President Obama’s Attorney General, a Republican Member of the Committee emphasized, and I quote, “What we need from our next Attorney General more than anything else is independence.” That same Member, who now still serves on the Committee, said, and I quote, “The job is not to be the President’s wingman. The job is to represent all Americans. The Attorney General must be willing to stand up to the President and say no when the office demands it.” When Attorney General nominee Merrick Garland came before this Committee, another one of my Republican colleagues, still serving, told Garland, and I quote, “My sole criterion for voting for your confirmation is your pledge to make sure that politics does not affect your job as Attorney General.” So the view that the Justice Department must be insulated from political influence should—should not be weaponized against political rivals has historically been bipartisan, certainly on this Committee. At this crucial moment in history, that view, not Mr. Trump’s view, must prevail.

Ms. Bondi, you have many years of experience in law enforcement, including nearly a decade of service as Attorney General in one of the largest States of the Nation, but I need to know that you would tell the President no if you’re asked to do something that is wrong, illegal, or unconstitutional. Ms. Bondi, you are one of four Trump personal lawyers that he has already selected for top positions in the Department of Justice. You joined Mr. Trump in working to overturn the 2020 election, you repeatedly described investigations and prosecutions of Mr. Trump as witch hunts, and you have echoed his calls for investigating and prosecuting his political opponents. This flies in the face of evidence, like Mr. Trump’s call to Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger. We’ve all heard that audio recording. These are the kinds of anti-democratic efforts that in the past you have defended, and it’s critical that we understand whether you remain supportive of Mr. Trump’s actions.

I also have questions whether you’ll focus on the needs of the American people rather than wealthy special interests. I’m concerned that you failed to identify your extensive lobbying for foreign governments and big corporations as potential conflicts of interest. There’ll be questions in this hearing on that issue. That’s why I’ve asked the Justice Department and the National Archives



for information on your lobbying of the Trump White House and your foreign lobbying disclosures.

I'm particularly concerned about your work on behalf of the government of Qatar, which reportedly paid you \$115,000 a month to launder their image on human trafficking and issue a bipartisan concern on this Committee. We need an Attorney General who will enforce our antitrust laws to prevent price fixing and monopolies that lead to higher prices for American consumers, not favor corporate giants that you've lobbied for in the past, like Amazon and Uber. I also have questions about some of your actions as Florida Attorney General. I'm concerned that your office failed to investigate more than 2 dozen complaints about the for-profit Trump University after Mr. Trump donated to your reelection campaign and held a fundraiser for you at Mar-a-Lago. In addition, you have a long track record on the issue of civil rights, reproductive rights, voting rights, and LGBTQ rights that needs to be discussed.

In contrast, Ms. Bondi, Merrick Garland didn't campaign for President Biden, never served as his personal attorney, never lobbied on behalf of foreign governments and corporate giants. After years of relentless criticism about Attorney General Garland from many of my Republican colleagues, I hope they're prepared to hold you to the same standard. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator GRASSLEY. Thank you. Okay, it's now time for Senators to introduce the nominee. The first one will be Senator Scott at the table, as you see, and Senator Schmitt is a Member of this Committee, at his place on the dais. Senator Scott, please proceed.

**INTRODUCTION OF HON. PAMELA JO BONDI, NOMINEE  
TO SERVE AS ATTORNEY GENERAL, BY HON. RICK SCOTT,  
A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA**

Senator SCOTT. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and Committee Members, it is an absolute honor to sit before you today to introduce my good friend, Pam Bondi, for her nomination hearing. I'd also like to recognize some important people appearing in support of her today: her husband, John, as well as her mother, father-in-law, sister, brother, sister-in-law and nephews, friends and family members of John. Many more would surely be here if space allowed.

I can tell you wholeheartedly that President Trump couldn't have a better leader than Pam Bondi for Attorney General. She is undoubtedly qualified, brilliant, and committed to defending and protecting the laws of this Nation and has a track record to prove it.

It's no secret that the DOJ is facing a public trust crisis after Democrats spent years weaponizing the justice system and the entire Federal Government. It's become an agency that attacks the American people instead of defending and protecting them. That will change under Pam Bondi. Under her leadership, the DOJ will actually fairly enforce the laws, protect the rights of the American people, and keep our Nation safe, and crack down on violent crimes and dangerous drugs, and the American people will trust her to do so. I know that well because I worked alongside Pam Bondi for 8 years when I was Governor of Florida and she was Florida's elected Attorney General, working to improve the lives of Floridians to make Florida the best State in the Nation to live, work, and raise

a family. Pam was an incredible partner, working to keep Florida safe and uphold the laws of our State, ensuring crime is aggressively pursued by law enforcement and prosecutors.

President Trump has made clear that one of his top priorities is to reverse the rising rates of crime, and specifically violent crime, that have plagued our communities over the past 4 years. Pam Bondi is uniquely equipped to advance his priority as U.S. Attorney General because she has a proven track record of success in achieving dramatic reductions in crime and violent crime during her time as Florida's Attorney General.

From 2010, the year before she took office, to 2018, the last year she was in office, together, Florida experienced a remarkable 26-percent drop in overall crime, including a 19.6-percent drop in violent crime, and a 27.4-percent drop in property crime. These aren't just numbers. These are tens of thousands of lives saved and communities improved and made safer, and families and businesses protected. As Florida's Attorney General, Pam Bondi also spearheaded other lifesaving initiatives, like tackling the opioid epidemic and fighting human trafficking. Her achievements are too many for me to list in this short introduction.

As U.S. Attorney General, Pam Bondi will restore law and order to the Nation. She'll put Americans' interests first and make the Nation a better and safer place. I urge every single Member of this Committee to support my friend Pam Bondi, and I look forward to voting for her confirmation soon on the Senate floor and help her get to work for the American people. Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Thank you, Senator Scott. You are welcome to stay.

Senator SCOTT. Thank you.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Schmitt.

**INTRODUCTION OF HON. PAMELA JO BONDI, NOMINEE  
TO SERVE AS ATTORNEY GENERAL, BY HON. ERIC SCHMITT,  
A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF MISSOURI**

Senator SCHMITT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Durbin, and Members of the Committee. It is an honor for me and a privilege to introduce Pam Bondi, President Trump's nominee to be the 87th Attorney General of the United States. I have known and worked closely with Pam for years, and I'm glad to call her a friend. When Pam was nominated by President Trump, my reaction was this is a home run. As many of us are, I was only to be outdone by Senator Graham, who described the nomination as a "grand slam, touchdown, hole-in-one, ace hat trick, slam dunk, Olympic gold medal pick." And he's right.

As the letter joined by more than a hundred former Justice Department officials put it, quote, "It's all too rare for senior Justice Department officials, much less Attorneys General, to have such a wealth of experience in the day-to-day work of keeping our communities safe," end quote. Pam exemplifies and personifies the Department of Justice's mission to uphold the rule of law, to keep our communities safe, and to protect our rights and liberties as Americans.

Pam has distinguished herself in her career in public service that has taken her from her small-town upbringing in Temple Terrace,

Florida, to a hearing before this esteemed Committee. After attending the University of Florida and Stetson University College of Law, she started her career as a local prosecutor in Hillsborough County, Florida. As a local prosecutor for nearly two decades, Pam kept her community safe, prosecuting violent criminals, drug dealers, those who had threatened the local community, and those who stood in opposition to the rule of law. Pam's fellow Floridians then elected her to serve as Florida's Attorney General, where she was the first woman in State history elected to that office.

As a former State Attorney General myself, I can vouch for the deep experience that Pam Bondi has developed from serving in that role. As the chief law enforcement official in her State, she worked with local prosecutors to fight crime, worked to protect our constitutional rights—or, the constitutional rights of Floridians, and stood up for the little guy by taking on abuses of power. As Florida's Attorney General, she worked tirelessly to combat the opioid crisis, fighting pill mills, and helping to combat the widespread misuse and trafficking of deadly drugs, including fentanyl, which have devastated families and communities all across our country. She stood up for Floridians in the wake of a 2008 financial crisis, leading to the National Mortgage Settlement Act, resulting in \$56 billion in compensation to victims. And after the Deep Water Horizon oil spill, Pam was there and stood up for Floridians by getting \$2 billion from the companies responsible. On a more personal note, Pam has always taken it upon herself to help others. She's incredibly generous and someone I could always count on. She's truthful, she's tough, and she's a born leader. She has charted her own course with the rare combination of backbone and heart.

The next Attorney General of the United States must restore trust by reversing the weaponization we've seen the last 4 years and refocusing that Department to its core mission: administering justice. The next Attorney General must promote the rule of law, take on violent crime, keep our communities safe, and safeguard the God-given rights that each American has protected in our Constitution. I can think of no one—no one more up to that task than Pam Bondi, a career prosecutor and widely respected Attorney General, with the prudence, fortitude, and temperance for this incredibly important job. Mr. Chairman, it is truly an honor for me to introduce Pam Bondi to this Committee and to our country here today and speak on her behalf, and it's my hope that her nomination will be swiftly confirmed. Thank you.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Thank you, Senator Schmitt. Now, Ms. Bondi, would you please come forward, and before you're seated, I'd like to administer oath. Would you please raise your right hand and answer this question?

[Witness is sworn in.]

Chairman GRASSLEY. Please be seated, and move ahead with your opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF HON. PAMELA JO BONDI, NOMINEE TO SERVE  
AS ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES**

Ms. BONDI. Thank you, Chairman Grassley, Ranking Member Durbin, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. I've had the opportunity to meet with almost all of you, and I greatly appre-

ciate that. I'm grateful to President Trump and to this Committee for your consideration to be the 87th Attorney General of the United States.

I would not be here without my family, and if you can bear with me for just a moment, a lot of them have made a very long trip, and I wrote them all down so I don't forget anyone. My beautiful mother, who I wouldn't be here—a retired kindergarten teacher—would not be here without my mom. As of a week ago, it was 12 years since we lost my dad to leukemia. It feels like 12 days. My amazing husband, John, and his two incredible girls, Collins and Finley. Collins is a senior at University of Florida, and I think all of you on this Committee will be very happy to know Finley is in cybersecurity. There's a third who is traveling abroad. I wish she could be here. My amazing father-in-law, David, my sister, Beth. My brother-in-law is home with my niece. My nephews, if you could just raise your hand—Evan, Jake, and soon to be niece, Savannah. My brother, Brad, a brilliant lawyer, my sister-in-law, Tandy, and my nephews, Justin, who just got a 4.0 at UVA, Rex, a great college tennis player, Brad, a great tennis player, and my niece—my beautiful niece, Rhea, and the little guy is in school because he's 10. My friends Leslie, Kathy, Dina, Tiffany, Kim, Paula, and so many of my former co-workers. And, Ranking Member Durbin, if you want to get dirt on me, these women have known me since I was a child—

[Laughter.]

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Seriously, most of them. So thank you for indulging me in that. They've all made a very long trip to be here, and thank you for holding my hearing, as well, and not postponing it. I appreciate that. Thank you, all.

From the moment I interned at the State Attorney's office in Tampa, Florida, all I wanted to do was be a prosecutor. The Supreme Court certified me, and I had four jury trials while still in law school—lost most of them, but had four jury trials and never wanted to do anything else. I continued my career there, trying everything from DUIs, domestic violence cases, capital murder cases, the whole gamut. I became a lead trial attorney in courtroom, every day trying career criminals. Was deputy chief of a division, and then ultimately was felony bureau chief, and eventually left to become Florida's 37th Attorney General for the State of Florida. Nothing has impacted my career more than my experience as a State prosecutor because I got to know and still keep in touch with many victims and their families from when I was a prosecutor.

Upon becoming Attorney General in 2011, I proudly served for two terms. I was term limited. I would probably still be there right now had I not been kicked out of office by term limits. I loved being Attorney General. I did my best to keep Florida safe, to continue to stand up for victims of crime, and to fight the opioid crisis and the drug crisis that was not only facing Florida, but this entire country.

Out of the top 100—this is one of the things I'm the most proud of—oxycodone dispensers in the entire country, I believe it was 98 of them—90 or 98 of them, lived in Florida. We fought for tough legislation. Kids were dropping dead every day. We fought for tough legislation, and after that legislation, none of those opioid

dealers/doctors practiced in Florida. We fought to eliminate human trafficking by raising awareness and prevention, and talking to parents and talking to children. We also provided critical resources, including safe houses that my State was lacking.

On the civil side, we worked to protect consumers. We tackled everything, including off-label prescription marketing, which affects, as you know, many, many people who can't afford prescriptions, as well. We partnered with States attorneys general from both parties and Federal agencies across administrations. We went after price gougers during hurricanes.

If confirmed as the next Attorney General of the United States, my overriding objective will be to return the Department of Justice to its core mission of keeping Americans safe and vigorously prosecuting criminals, and that includes getting back to basics: gangs, drugs, terrorists, cartels, our border, and our foreign adversaries. That is what the American people expect, and that is what they deserve from the Department of Justice. If confirmed, I will do everything in my power, and it will be my great responsibility to make America safe again.

Making America safe again also requires reducing recidivism. We have to fix the Bureau of Prisons, and I am looking on both sides of the aisle. The Bureau has suffered from years of mismanagement, lack of funding, and low morale. I was proud to support President Trump's First Step Act. I think more can be implemented and more can be done on that front. President Trump's leadership on criminal justice reform has demonstrated what is possible when a President is unafraid to do things that have been deemed to be too difficult. We have to reach across the aisle and get solutions for all of these problems. Like the President, I believe we are on the cusp of a new golden age where the Department of Justice can and will do better, if I am confirmed.

Last and most importantly, if confirmed, I will fight every day to restore confidence and integrity to the Department of Justice and each of its components. The partisanship, the weaponization will be gone. America will have one tier of justice for all. In all this work, I'll collaborate closely with this Committee. I will work with all of you as I have committed to do when I met with almost all of you, and I will partner not only with the Federal agencies, but with the State and local officials throughout our great country.

I look forward to answering your questions today and working together for this country and our Constitution. Thank you, Senators.  
[The prepared statement of Ms. Bondi appears as a submission for the record.]

Chairman GRASSLEY. I will ask, first, questions, then Senator Durbin, and then I'll call on the Democrat people the way that Senator Durbin would say so on their arrival or here by seniority in the same way on the House side, and I'll make sure that I don't abuse the 7 minutes.

I want you to have your attention on this binder that I put up here. It's a key factor of each Senator's role in oversight. It contains 144 oversight letters that I sent to the Biden-Harris Justice Department and its component agencies, with many of those letters in there to the FBI. Adding letters to the Inspector General, that would be about 165 letters, so I've sent more letters since you've

been in my office before Christmas. Should you be confirmed, 144 letters will be your responsibility. The responses I have received so far fall in two categories. First, they weren't answered at all. Second, I received a response, but it didn't fully respond. Said another way, the Justice Department merely sent me words on a piece of paper. So, should you be confirmed, you'll have an obligation to respond even to the Minority and consider a letter from them, even if my signature's not on it, as they want information. Will you commit to responding to my oversight requests, as well as the requests of other Members of the Committee?

Ms. BOND. Chairman, either I or my top staff will personally review the letters and do everything we can to respond to you.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Your tenure as Florida Attorney General was impressive. You fought against pill mills, human trafficking, you eliminated a backlog of rape test kits in State labs, you fought against organized retail theft, and you were known to stand for law and order. With such achievements, it's easy to see why the people of Florida reelected you in 2014 and why President-elect Trump nominated you to serve as the Nation's chief law enforcement officer. So this gives you a chance to tell us on this Committee and the people of this country what you're proud of as your record as Attorney General of Florida.

Ms. BOND. Thank you, Chairman Grassley. I was truly honored to serve the people of the State of Florida for 8 years, but it was a team effort. I had great people around me, many of whom are in this room today, and we did a lot. We did a lot to fight crime, and I've been reminiscing a lot since I was asked to take this nomination.

Opioids, as I talked about, were a top priority right when I took office. When I was running for office, I went through the entire State of Florida. Parents were walking up to me, handing me pictures of their children who were deceased from opioid abuse. After I was elected, I took those pictures and I framed them in my office as a goal of stopping that fight, which I talked about in my opening statement. And if U.S. Attorney General, I'll bring those pictures back out, and they will be there to inspire me on the further drug abuse we're facing throughout this country.

We also learned that something else was happening. Pregnant women were having babies as a result of being opioid dependent. We called it neonatal abstinence syndrome. We fought to educate mothers. We fought that issue, as well. Fentanyl was wreaking havoc in our country, but it was just getting started. I actually fought my own party a bit on scheduling fentanyl because at that time, people thought it was something you merely got in the hospital on a patch after surgery—apples and oranges—and, boy, do we all know that now, the difference. Fentanyl is raging throughout our country, and I will do everything I can to fight that with the agencies that fall under the Department of Justice.

Human trafficking became a top priority for me as Attorney General. I had the opportunity on a bipartisan trip to go to Mexico, and the one thing I found out there, they were doing better than we were. They had safe houses. I saw things I never dreamed I would see, and all of these things in my past have formed the person I am right now sitting here before you. I came back to Florida. We

started a Human Trafficking Council, and we partnered with others, and we expanded and added safe houses in the State of Florida. I don't know how many are in this country right now, but I would like to partner with both sides, if confirmed, to continue those efforts.

Chairman GRASSLEY. I'd like to interrupt you——

Ms. BONDI. Yes, sir.

Chairman GRASSLEY [continuing]. And go to another question, and I'll have another round so you can finish on that point. I'd like to ask you about something that's central to fighting Government waste and fraud, the False Claims Act. I want you to know that Attorney General Garland calls me once a year. He called me yesterday to tell me the success of the False Claims Act. Since 1986 when I got it passed and President Reagan signed it, it's brought in \$78 billion as of yesterday, his report, \$2-and-nine-tenths billion for the year of 2024. Most of that's because of patriotic whistleblowers who found the fraud and brought the cases forward at their own risk. The Supreme Court has long upheld the law's constitutionality, but I want to know your view. Is the False Claims Act constitutional?

Before you answer that, one time in the 1990s, one of the Attorney Generals said it wasn't constitutional, and when that same person by the name of Barr was back 5 years ago to be Attorney General, he said it was constitutional. So if confirmed, will you commit—well, answer that first question. Do you think it's constitutional? Would you defend the constitutionality of it——

Ms. BONDI. I would defend the constitutionality, of course, of the False Claims Act, Senator.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Okay. Last question. If confirmed, would you commit to continuing DOJ's defense of the constitutionality of it, and will you assure the entire staff and funding levels to properly support and prosecute False Claim cases?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, the False Claims Act is so important, and especially by what you said with whistleblowers, as well, and the protection and the money it brings back our country. Yes, sir.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Thank you for your answers. Senator Durbin.

Senator DURBIN. Thank you, Senator Grassley. Ms. Bondi, if you're successful in your nomination, this Democrat would like to give you three words of advice: "Answer Grassley's letters."

[Laughter.]

Senator DURBIN. You'll never hear the end of it if you don't.

[Laughter.]

Senator DURBIN. At issue, I believe, in this nomination hearing is not your competence, nor your experience. At issue is your ability to say no. More than any other Cabinet official, the Attorney General has to be prepared to put the Constitution first and even tell the President of the United States you're wrong. The political danger and personal costs of such a decision are well documented. You have only to ask former Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Bill Barr, whom Donald Trump sacked for lack of loyalty. And so I have three basic questions I'd like to ask you.

Most Americans believe that central to the peaceful transition of power in a democracy is the acceptance of the results of an election.

To my knowledge, Donald Trump has never acknowledged the legal results of the 2020 election. Are you prepared to say today, under oath, without reservation, that Donald Trump lost the Presidential contest to Joe Biden in 2020?

Ms. BONDI. Ranking Member Durbin, President Biden is the President of the United States. He was duly sworn in, and he is the President of the United States. There was a peaceful transition of power. President Trump left office and was overwhelmingly elected in 2024.

Senator DURBIN. Do you have any doubts that Joe Biden had the majority of electoral votes necessary to be elected for President in 2020?

Ms. BONDI. You know, Senator, all I can tell you as a prosecutor is from my firsthand experience, and I accept the results. I accept, of course, that Joe Biden is President of the United States. But what I can tell you is what I saw firsthand when I went to Pennsylvania as an advocate for the campaign. I was an advocate for the campaign, and I was on the ground in Pennsylvania, and I saw many things there, but do I accept the results? Of course I do. Do I agree with what happened? I saw so much. You know, not—no one from either side of the aisle should want there to be any issues with election integrity in our country. We should all want our elections to be free and fair and the rules and the laws to be followed.

Senator DURBIN. I think that question deserved a “yes” or “no,” and I think the length of your answer is an indication that you weren’t prepared to answer “yes.” Have you heard the recording of President Trump on January 2, 2021, when he urged the Secretary of State of Georgia to, quote, “Find 11,780 votes” and declare him the winner of that State?

Ms. BONDI. No. I’ve heard about it through clips, but, no, Senator, I’ve not heard it.

Senator DURBIN. What was your reaction to President Trump making that call?

Ms. BONDI. I have—I would have to listen to the tape, Senator.

Senator DURBIN. Well, the quote that I give you is exact. He said to the Georgia Secretary of State, “Find 11,780 votes.”

Ms. BONDI. Do you have the entire context of that call?

Senator DURBIN. It is——

Ms. BONDI. I feel like it was much longer than that——

Senator DURBIN. It is——

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. And may have been taken out of context.

Senator DURBIN. It was an hour long——

Ms. BONDI. Right.

Senator DURBIN [continuing]. And you can certainly listen to it. I hope you will. Every American should. As a former prosecutor, are you not concerned that the President of the United States called a State election official and asked him to find enough votes to change the results of the election?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I have not listened to the hour-long conversation, but it’s my understanding that is not what he asked him to do.

Senator DURBIN. You need to listen to it. I’ll ask a third question. Do you believe that the January 6 rioters who’ve been convicted of violent assaults on police officers should be pardoned?



Ms. BONDI. Senator, if confirmed as Attorney General of the United States, the pardons, of course, fall under the President. But if asked to look at those cases, I will look at each case and advise on a case-by-case basis, just as I did my entire career as a prosecutor.

Senator DURBIN. You also advise the President on pardons as part of your responsibility as Attorney General. And so I'm asking you, do you believe that those who've been convicted of the January 6 riot, violent assaults on our police officers should be pardoned? That's a simple question.

Ms. BONDI. So, Senator, I have not seen any of those files, of course. If confirmed, and if asked to advise the President, I will look at each and every file. But let me be very clear in speaking to you, I condemn any violence on a law enforcement officer in this country.

Senator DURBIN. Let me ask you about your work as a lobbyist for Ballard Partners. You did not list your current position as a partner at the lobbying firm, nor the work you've done for your Ballard Partner clients, such as lobbying for the country of Qatar for \$115,000 a month, and for corporate giants Amazon and Uber when you were asked about conflicts of interest. Why do you believe your work as a lobbyist does not constitute potential conflicts of interest?

Ms. BONDI. Well, Senator, first, that was the amount my firm received. I believe multiple people represented the country of Qatar within my firm. My role—and I am very proud of the work that I did, it was a short time, and I wish it had been longer for Qatar—was anti-human trafficking efforts leading into the World Cup, which is something I'd like to talk about later, too. I was registered as FARA along with many members of my firm. That was the sole portion of my representation for Qatar. Now, if there are any conflicts with anyone I represented in private practice, I would consult with the career ethics officials within the Department and make the appropriate decision. I would also like to point out to you, I don't believe that I would be the first Attorney General who has represented and advocated for businesses in their past.

Senator DURBIN. Of course not. The question is whether you will recuse yourself from any case involving your Ballard clients. One of those clients was the GEO Group. Was it not?

Ms. BONDI. GEO, yes.

Senator DURBIN. A private prison company you lobbied for. It manages correctional institutions and detention facilities. The GEO Group has faced criticism for safety violations, inadequate healthcare, and poor management. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is GEO's largest source of revenue. Under the Trump administration, GEO stands to earn hundreds of millions of dollars by detaining immigrants if there is this mass deportation. Would you sense any conflict of interest if you're asked to judge the performance of this Government contractor?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I will consult with the career ethics officials within the Department of Justice and make the appropriate decision.

Senator DURBIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you. Congratulations.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you.

Senator GRAHAM. You forgot to say that John's family was from South Carolina.

Ms. BONDI. The Upstate, I'm sorry.

Senator GRAHAM. Yes, I'll give you a pass on that, and from Anderson, by the way. So, listen, President Trump asked a bunch of us who would you pick for Attorney General. How many of you got asked that? On our side? Probably didn't ask Dick, but he asked me. I said, Pam Bondi. That's, like, an easy decision. I couldn't think of anybody more qualified that he knew, that he trusted. And it's okay to have a—you were his lawyer. Right?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, sir. I represented him when they tried to impeach him the first time as part of White House Counsel Office of Special Counsel.

Senator GRAHAM. Being Trump's lawyer prepares you for many things. So, yes, you have a long-standing relationship with the President, and he trusts you. That's a good thing. That's probably why President Kennedy picked his brother, Bobby Kennedy. I guess you can say no to your older brother, I'm sure he would, but this idea there's something bad is ridiculous. Who do you pick? You pick people you know. You pick people you trust, people who are qualified. I'm glad he picked you. He knows you, he trusts you, and you're highly qualified. So the idea that there's something wrong with that is just absolutely ridiculous.

So let's talk about the job you're about to have here. Do you support making certain drug cartels in Mexico foreign terrorist organizations?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I personally went to Mexico. I personally dealt with these cartels when I was a State prosecutor, and they are a grave and violent threat—

Senator GRAHAM. Would you consider—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. To our country.

Senator GRAHAM [continuing]. Would you consider advising the President?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator.

Senator GRAHAM. Good. Good. Now, when it comes to Crossfire Hurricane, are those days over if you're Attorney General?

Ms. BONDI. Absolutely.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. Laken Riley, are you familiar with that case?

Ms. BONDI. Sadly, I am, Senator Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. Do you know why the man who killed her was released from custody? He was paroled due to detention capacity—

[Poster is displayed.]

Senator GRAHAM [continuing]. At the Central Processing Center in El Paso, Texas. Now, that's not your call. It'll be DOJ. But do you agree with me that the statute regarding parole doesn't allow parole to be based on we don't have detention beds? There's nothing in that statute would authorize parole based on lack of capacity. Are you familiar with that statute?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, sir, and that's frightening.

Senator GRAHAM. Yes, well, it is frightening. Are you going to fix it?

Ms. BONDI. I am going to do everything in my power to fix it—

Senator GRAHAM. Well, are you—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. If confirmed as Attorney General.

Senator GRAHAM. Are you going to advise President Trump we need more beds? Tom Homan's the guy that's going to do this. But would you, as Attorney General, say we need more bed space so Laken Riley never happens again?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, my job, if confirmed as Attorney General, will be to keep America safe—

Senator GRAHAM. Do you think we need—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. And that include—

Senator GRAHAM [continuing]. More detention space?

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. And that includes having enough space for violent criminals, for people that should not be in this country—

Senator GRAHAM. Yes.

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Who have committed violent crimes—

Senator GRAHAM. To the public—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. And Laken Riley is one of many.

Senator GRAHAM. Yes, but 41,000 beds in this country to detain people, we got, like, millions of people here illegally. We let this dude go because we didn't have any place to put him. I hope those days are over. And if, Tom, you're listening out there, I hope you'll create enough detention space to make sure we don't find this dilemma ever again. Do you think we're at war, and if so, who with?

Ms. BONDI. Oh, Senator, we're at war on so many fronts. Of course—

Senator GRAHAM. Are we at war with ISIS?

Ms. BONDI. Of course we're at war with ISIS.

Senator GRAHAM. They're at war with us. Do you agree with that?

Ms. BONDI. Absolutely, Senator.

Senator GRAHAM. Do you think since our withdrawal from Afghanistan, threats to our Homeland have gone up from ISIS?

Ms. BONDI. Yes.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. March 7, 2024, General Kurilla: "I assess ISIS-K retains the capability and will to attack the U.S. and Western interests abroad in as little as 6 months with little or no warning." That's March 2024. General McKenzie: "ISIS-K has a strong desire to attack the United States after it began to grow in Afghanistan following the U.S. exit in August 2021." He also stated, "The threat from ISIS-K is growing." Major General Quantock: "The U.S. remains target number one for ISIS-K." Do you agree with that?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I don't have my security clearance, but from everything I've read and heard, ISIS is one of the greatest threats.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. Well, when you get your security clearance, you're going to find out these people are coming after us and they want to kill us. So I would like to have a strategy to deal with the ISIS threat that's beyond just the law enforcement model. Does that make sense to you, that we should use every tool in the toolbox?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, that includes wrapping in our State and local officials, too, and better cooperation throughout our country and our world.

Senator GRAHAM. I totally agree. Do you support reauthorizing FISA in 2025?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I believe 702 is up in 2026.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay, I'm sorry, '26.

Ms. BONDI. I believe it's 2026.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay.

Ms. BONDI. I believe it's 2026, and we will closely be looking at that. FISA is a very important tool.

Senator GRAHAM. Do you agree that the—702 provides important intel-gathering capability to protect our Nation?

Ms. BONDI. Extremely important.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. So, Pam, you're about to step into a job that's one of the most important jobs in any democracy. Let's go back to pardons. If I'm a lawyer for somebody in jail, would you promise to listen to the application and read it before you made a decision?

Ms. BONDI. Yes.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. No matter who you are. Good. That's the way it works. People want to bargain with you up here—will you do this, will you do that? All I ask you to do is call it as you see it. Hire good, competent people, and give the President the best legal advice you can. Run the Department of Justice in a manner that other people would want to join it one day. Growing up, I had a fondness for the FBI. I watched the show, I think, it was every Sunday. Wanted to be an FBI agent. Right now, the FBI needs an image overhaul.

So you have a real task ahead of you in two areas: to restore trust to many Americans who have lost trust in the Department of Justice, and to make sure that this country is safe from drug cartels that are killing 3,000 Americans every 2 weeks for money, to go after these people and to protect our Homeland that's under siege. I think you're the perfect pick at one of the most dangerous times in American history, and I look forward to supporting you.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you, Senator.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Whitehouse.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. Thank you, Chairman. Welcome, Ms. Bondi.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you, Senator, and thank you for meeting with me. I greatly appreciate that.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. It was a pleasure. Ms. Bondi, you were a courtroom prosecutor for a great many years. As a courtroom prosecutor, did you ever have an enemies list?

Ms. BONDI. No, Senator.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. And you went on to be Florida's Attorney General. As Florida's Attorney General, did you ever have an enemies list?

Ms. BONDI. No, Senator.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. As Florida's Attorney General, you were responsible for hiring into the Florida Department of Attorney General. Correct?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, the Attorney General's office in Florida is the third largest in the State, approximately 1,400 employees and approximately 400 lawyers. Only California and Texas are bigger offices, so yes.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. And you were responsible for hiring into that office while you were Attorney General?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. Would you have hired someone into the Florida Attorney General's office who you knew had an enemies list?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, to cut to the chase, you're clearly talking about Kash Patel. I don't believe he has an enemies list. He made a quote on TV which I have not heard. I saw your sign or Senator Durbin's sign about Kash, but I know that Kash Patel has had 60 jury trials as a public defender, as a prosecutor. He has great experience in the Intel Department, Department of Defense. I have known Kash, and I believe that Kash is the right person at this time for this job. You'll have the ability to question Mr. Patel—

Senator WHITEHOUSE. And I'm questioning you—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. When you do.

Senator WHITEHOUSE [continuing]. Right now about whether you will enforce an enemy's list that he announced publicly on television.

Ms. BONDI. Oh, Senator, I'm sorry. There will never be an enemies list within the Department of Justice.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. Thank you. The FBI's—what is the FBI's role in national security and counterterrorism, and how important is that role?

Ms. BONDI. You know, Senator, I believe now more than ever, counterterrorism is so important and vital in our country. We are facing such incredible threats, here and abroad. If—I'm sure many of you saw FBI—former FBI Director Wray's interview on "60 Minutes." He talked about the threats that—frankly, again, I don't have my security clearance—

Senator WHITEHOUSE. Yes, but given that—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. But the threats facing us, Senator, from China—from China right now that are so great—

Senator WHITEHOUSE [continuing]. Given that—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. With the sleeper cells within our country.

Senator WHITEHOUSE [continuing]. Given that importance, is it responsible to call for shutting down the FBI's counterterrorism and national security work, and will you, as Attorney General, impede or shut down the FBI's counterterrorism and national security work?

Ms. BONDI. Senator—

Senator WHITEHOUSE. Two questions.

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I believe that national security is vital right now for our country on so many fronts. I could continue to discuss many others.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. And the FBI's role in that.

Ms. BONDI. And the FBI plays a vital role in counterterrorism throughout our world.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. Which you will or will not shut down?

Ms. BONDI. I will look at each agency. I have no intention of shutting anything down right now, Senator. I am not in that office yet, and if confirmed, I will look at each individual agency and how it should be managed, but counterterrorism right now in our world is vital.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. You have said that Department of Justice prosecutors will be prosecuted in the Trump administration. What Department of Justice prosecutors will be prosecuted and why?

Ms. BONDI. I said that on TV. I said prosecutors will be prosecuted, to finish the quote, if bad. Investigators will be investigated. You know, we all take an oath, Senator, to uphold the law. None of us are above the law. Let me give you a really good example of a bad lawyer within the Justice Department—a guy named Clinesmith, who altered a FISA warrant, one of the most important things we can do in this country. So will everyone be held to an equal—equal, fair system of justice if I am the next Attorney General? Absolutely, and no one is above the law.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. Under what circumstances will you prosecute journalists for what they write?

Ms. BONDI. I believe in the freedom of speech. Only if anyone commits a crime—it's pretty basic, Senator, with anything, with any victim, and this goes back to my entire career for 18 years as a prosecutor and then 8 years as Florida's Attorney General. You find the facts of the case, you apply the law in good faith, and you treat everyone fairly.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. And it would not be appropriate for a prosecutor to start with a name and look for a crime. It's a prosecutor's job to start with a crime and look for a name. Correct?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I think that is the whole problem with the weaponization that we have seen the last 4 years and what's been happening to Donald Trump. They targeted Donald Trump. They went after him—actually starting back in 2016. They targeted his campaign. They have launched countless investigations against him. That will not be the case if I am Attorney General. I will not politicize that office. I will not target people simply because of their political affiliation. Justice will be administered evenhandedly throughout this country. Senator, we've got to bring this country back together. We've got to move forward, or we're going to lose our country.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. Yes, I think the concern is that weaponization of the Justice Department may well occur under your tenure, and we want to make sure that that's not the case, that you remain independent, that you remain able to and willing to tell the President no when that's necessary to protect the Constitution and the integrity of the Department, so that's why I'm asking these questions.

We talked in the meeting about the contacts policy that has prevailed, really since Senator Hatch sat in that chair and demanded of the Clinton Justice Department—through all the administrations since then, with the exception of a brief period under Attorney General Gonzales, which he corrected and which did not end well for him—there has been a contacts policy that limits contacts between the White House and the Department of Justice to a very few senior officials on each side. In your role as Attorney General,

if you are confirmed, will you maintain, defend, and enforce that long-standing contacts policy?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, yes. I will meet with White House Counsel and I will meet with the appropriate officials, and follow the contacts policy.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. My time has expired. Thank you, Ms. Bondi.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Cornyn.

Senator CORNYN. Ms. Bondi, your testimony is music to my ears. Ms. BONDI. Thank you.

Senator CORNYN. One of the things that I have been most concerned about over the last—certainly the last 4 years and extending back during President Trump’s administration is weaponization and politicalization of the Department of Justice, which, together with the FBI, is one of the most important institutions in this country. If people don’t trust that their elected officials will faithfully enforce the law or administer equal justice under the law, they’ve lost faith in America. And that—that disturbs me greatly, and I know it does you, too, based on what you said. So I’m delighted to hear you say what you have said, but I want to talk about some specific topics. Time is short. First, the Border.

I believe President Biden and Vice President Harris had presided over one of the biggest humanitarian and public safety disasters in American history. Senator Cruz and I represent a State with 1,200 miles of common border with America. But as you pointed out with fentanyl, what happens at the Border doesn’t stay at the Border. Fentanyl poisoning is the most common cause of death of young people between the age of 18 and 45. We know where it comes from. The precursors come from China. They go to the cartels. They mix them up, make them look like innocuous pills, and young people take them and die. It’s just that simple and that tragic.

So there’s just so much that we could talk about with regard to the Border, but, you know, I know people voted for President Trump in large part because of his promise to restore security at the Border. Will you do everything within your power as Attorney General to enforce the laws on the book, including the President’s Executive orders, which I anticipate he will be signing on January the 20th, when he is sworn in, and help do everything you can and the Department of Justice can is to restore security to our Southern Border?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator, absolutely.

Senator CORNYN. One example is, of course, if you come here from anywhere in the country and you show up at the Border, under the Biden and Harris administration policies, you’ll simply be released into the interior of the country, either to await a trial date, which may never occur due to the enormous backlog, or you will simply be paroled. And I know “parole” has a special connotation in the criminal law, but in this context, as you know, it’s designed to be administered on a case-by-case basis. Yet President Biden and Vice President Harris had granted parole, that is, released people into the United States, on a categorical basis, or anybody who shows up, or because they don’t have the detention facilities to keep them. So do you believe Laken Riley would be alive

today if President Biden and Vice President Harris had enforced the law and secured the Border?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, he should not have been in our country, and then Laken Riley would have been alive, and I don't think it's just Laken Riley. There are so many victims throughout our country. Not only that, we're all familiar with the violent gangs who are coming into our country, walking into our country freely through the open border, the cartels, the gangs. Venezuelans let people out of their prisons—it's been reported. I don't have the security clearance yet to see what's happening, but I know—we all know, there are criminals throughout our country, and it is my commitment to you, on both sides of the aisle, that I will do everything in my power with the agencies that fall under me, if I am confirmed, to make America safe again. We have to do that, Senator.

Senator CORNYN. Well, many of us, of course, see classified information on the Intelligence Committee or just generally in our duties as a Senator, and so you're not going to feel any better about the blinking lights, the danger that Director Wray has talked about.

In my closing moments here, I want to revisit an issue that is of particular importance. Sixty percent of the President's Daily Brief, which is the intelligence brief that the Director of National Intelligence and the CIA Director deliver to the President, comes from Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. I've called this the most important law that most people have never heard of. I know you have, and you're familiar with it, but I want to ask you a few questions about that.

It's been called the crown jewel of U.S. intelligence, and, of course, it cannot be used—legally used to spy on American citizens, and if it is, it ought to be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. I know you would agree with that. But there've been some, as you know, and as you pointed out to Senator Graham, we have a temporary extension of the existing authorization for the use of the Intelligence Community to target foreign threats to our national security that expires in 2026. And I'd like you just to confirm here on the record that you will enforce that law and you can support the law as it is written.

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I haven't read the entire 702 in front of you, but I will commit to reading that and doing everything I can to keep America safe again.

Senator CORNYN. Of course you will. So Director Ratcliffe, who's going to be—I'm going to go to his hearing for CIA Director—of course, he was confirmed as Director of National Intelligence. He was—some have argued that in order to query or look at lawfully collected FISA 702 product, that you need to get a warrant requirement in order to show probable cause that a crime, including espionage, perhaps has been committed. But Director Ratcliffe has written that a warrant requirement may not achieve its intended objectives and could hinder national security efforts. Do you share Director Ratcliffe's concerns?

Ms. BONDI. I would read his memo, and I will speak to you after I read his memo, Senator.

Senator CORNYN. We need to have a—I hope you and I can continue this conversation after this because I think there's a lot of



misinformation with regard to how Section 702 works. I happen to be one of the Members of the Senate Intelligence Committee, we read that product on a regular basis, and it is not used to spy on American people. I think what's fundamentally missing is a lack of trust in the Intelligence Community, including the FBI, which I'm hoping you and Mr. Patel can restore. Thank you.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Klobuchar.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. We had a good meeting this week. Thank you for that, and I appreciated your priorities on human trafficking that you mentioned today, that work, as well as fentanyl and some of your other prosecution experience. We have some similar backgrounds in doing that. And I want to talk about—first of all, the U.S. Attorney's Office in Minnesota, one of the premier offices in the country. This office has been instrumental in combating violent crime, dismantling street gangs, taking fentanyl off our streets, enforcing civil rights laws after George Floyd's murder, ensuring victims of fraud get justice. Do you agree that it should be a priority to support U.S. attorneys, frontline prosecutors, and case agents who work hard every single day on our streets?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I think that is one of the most important things in our country right now, and there are so many good men and women within the Justice Department throughout our country, as well as all the law enforcement agencies. Yes, they work very hard, and they will be supported.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. I'm concerned about some of the proposals that could put cuts in the COPS Program, Byrne JAG Programs—I know you're familiar with those. Senator Murkowski and I lead the COPS Reauthorization bill. Will you commit to continue to support those programs?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I will read everything about those programs because that is a top priority of mine, and I would love to meet with you on that—and Senator Murkowski to support law enforcement and those programs.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Thank you. Independence from political interference is vital to the legitimacy and success of the Department of Justice. I was honestly troubled by some of the answers to Senator Durbin's questions. We will continue that discussion, I'm sure, on the Committee about the election, but I want to focus on the investigation, charging decisions. As a prosecutor, I'm sure you had this experience. I would get calls from people, hey, that's just a kid, give him a break, and I remember one answer I gave was, he's 40 years old, he's not a kid. But that kind of interference is attempted all the time, and one of my concerns here—whether it's a call from a friend, a corporate lobbyist, a White House—it has been very clear that the Attorneys General of both parties have established clear policies to ensure the White House doesn't tamper with criminal investigation and prosecutions. At Attorney General Mike Mukasey's hearing, he made clear that any attempt by the White House, and these are the words, “to interfere with the case is not to be countenanced. Any call to a line assistant or to a United States attorney from a political person relating to a case is to be cut and curtailed.” Do you agree with this statement?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, yes, I believe that the Justice Department must be independent and must act independently. The number one job is to enforce the law fairly and evenhandedly, and that's what will be done if I am confirmed as the Attorney General.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. So you will provide an assurance to every Member of this Committee that the Justice Department will only follow the facts and the law, and the White House will play no role in cases investigated or brought?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, it will be my job, if confirmed as Attorney General, to make those decisions. Politics will not play a part. I've demonstrated that my entire career as a prosecutor, as Attorney General, and I will continue to do that, if you confirm me as the 87th Attorney General of the United States of America.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. In an earlier question, some of my colleagues talked about China and the risks, yet you have a nominee from this incoming administration, Kash Patel, the pick to head the FBI—I have serious concerns about him—has referred to the FBI's Intel Division, which is responsible for protecting us from foreign adversaries like China, as, quote, "The biggest problem the FBI has had," and he said that he wants to, quote, "Break that component out of the FBI." Do you agree?

Ms. BONDI. I have not seen those comments from Mr. Patel. I would review them, but we have to do everything we can to protect our country. Again, Mr. Patel would fall under me and the Department of Justice, and I will ensure that all laws are followed—and so will he.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Okay. There are many decisions made by the FBI Director, having seen a number of them do their work, that can be made. While I agree you would be the boss of Kash Patel, I'm not sure that you would be able to intervene with every decision or position that he had or know what he's doing. So let's continue.

Do you agree it is the duty of the Justice Department to defend the laws Congress passes, and will you commit to do, even when the President may disagree with an Act, campaigned against its passage, or called for its repeal? President Reagan's AG, William French Smith, said the Department policy was, "The Department has the duty to defend an act of Congress whenever a reasonable argument can be made in its support." So I am specifically referring to the 2022 law that I long led that we passed to empower Medicare to negotiate drug prices, major savings for seniors. Will you commit to defend the law against the lawsuits from Big Pharma?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I was involved in Big Pharma cases when I was Attorney General of the State of Florida, and I will commit to protect the laws of the United States of America.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Okay. Thank you. That would also—same question with the Supreme Court is going to be hearing a challenge to the Affordable Care Act's coverage of preventative services, and despite the fact that you twice joined suits to have the entire Affordable Care Act invalidated, will you commit to defending this law?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, I believe this is very different. It's a very isolated—it's different. It's not the entire Affordable Care Act. But I will—it's pending litigation, of course, within the Department.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Since the 1990s, the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act has protected patients, providers, and facilities that provide reproductive health services. Will you commit to continuing to enforce the FACE Act to address violence and threats against those providing reproductive healthcare services?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, the FACE Act not only protects abortion clinics, but it also protects pregnancy centers and people going for counseling. The law should be applied evenhandedly. Yes, Senator.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. So you'll uphold the enforcement of that law?

Ms. BONDI. I'll uphold the enforcement of the law, Senator.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Okay. And I will ask my antitrust questions in the next round. We had a good discussion about that, and I do appreciate the nominee that has been put in place for the Antitrust Division, and there's incredibly important work that has to be done in that Division. So, thank you—

Ms. BONDI. Gail Slater is remarkable. Thank you.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Thank you.

Chairman GRASSLEY. I thank all my colleagues for abiding by the 7-minute rule. Before I call on Senator Lee, I want everybody to plan on our first break would be about 11:50, and that would be 30 minutes for lunch. Senator Lee.

Senator LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ms. Bondi—

Ms. BONDI. Thank you.

Senator LEE [continuing]. For being here today. I do share the assessment that Gail Slater is great. Had a great meeting with her yesterday, and just thrilled that you're here and that you're willing to serve. I'd like to talk to you, as a longtime lawyer and one who has handled a variety of criminal matters, about the Fourth Amendment. What can you tell us about the Fourth Amendment's warrant requirement and why it's so important?

Ms. BONDI. Well, the warrant requirement is so important, which I've dealt with that since I was in my twenties as a State prosecutor—a warrant is so important because it protects citizens' rights, and that's why it's so important.

Senator LEE. And it does that specifically because under the Fourth Amendment, you're required to go to a judge, and you're required to show a judge evidence, evidence providing probable cause. And based on that probable cause, you can describe with particularity the things or persons to be searched or seized. And on that basis, the judge may issue or not issue the warrant, but without it, you can't get it. Now, this is time consuming, no doubt. Right?

Ms. BONDI. Oh, I've done many of them. Yes, it's very time consuming, Senator.

Senator LEE. And there's probably not a law enforcement officer anywhere in the world who wouldn't acknowledge that that they could save time if they didn't have to go about it, and yet we require it. Why is that so important that we do it?

Ms. BONDI. Well, it's so important for the reasons you just laid out. When I said I've done many of them, I've approved them and

not approved them as a State prosecutor because law enforcement—there are checks and balances. And law enforcement must bring these warrants to prosecutors to see if there is sufficient evidence. Then after that's done, they have to take them to a judge to have a judge sign them. So there have to be sufficient checks and balances throughout our system.

Senator LEE. So even after you, as Attorney General, as the chief law enforcement officer and prosecutorial authority in the State of Florida, approved it within your office, you still had to go to the judge. And if it was late at night, early in the morning, didn't matter when, you had to find a judge.

Ms. BONDI. All hours of the night. That was more when I was a State prosecutor. As Attorney General, the Office of the Statewide Prosecutor Nick Cox, would have done that many, many times at all hours throughout the night and woken up many, many judges throughout the State of Florida.

Senator LEE. Is there an exception to the warrant requirement that exists any time it would be inconvenient for prosecutors or anytime national security might be involved?

Ms. BONDI. I'm not certain about national security, but absolutely no for a State prosecutor.

Senator LEE. Right.

Ms. BONDI. No.

Senator LEE. There's no—

Ms. BONDI. No exception. No.

Senator LEE. There's no catch-all exception that just says this is important or it would be inconvenient for the prosecutor, and with good reason.

Ms. BONDI. Right.

Senator LEE. We've learned through sad experience over many hundreds of years, not only in our own country, but also in that of our mother country, what happens when you don't have this in the loop.

So you've been asked today a little bit about Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, also known as FISA. There are those who have repeatedly assured Members of this Committee, including myself, that don't worry. Content of phone calls or electronic communications involving American citizens sometimes resulting in the, quote, unquote, "incidental collection" of American citizens' private conversations, don't worry, their Fourth Amendment rights are just fine. And yet when they incidentally collect the communications of American citizens, either because they're perhaps unwittingly talking to somebody who might be an agent of a foreign power and themselves under 702 surveillance, they get onto this big database. And at times there are those in the Government, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who have gotten into that database and done so, of course, without a warrant because there currently is no warrant requirement. This has the effect of what we call a de facto back door warrant list search.

Would you agree with me that that is potentially concerning any time an American citizen's private conversations are intercepted, stored, whether as an incidental collection or otherwise, they ought not be searched without some kind of probable cause showing. I assume you'd agree with me there.

Ms. BONDI. Yes.

Senator LEE. Yes, and it's important. Sometimes people will defend that by saying national security is involved, as if that's the beginning and the end of the inquiry. That has never been the case, and I hope and pray it never will be the case because that's not what the Fourth Amendment says, not what it does, not what it ever can be. So it's my sincere hope that the next time FISA 702 comes up for reauthorization, Congress finally do what it has been avoiding for a long time, which is to ensure that this doesn't happen.

We've heard again and again from people who, if you're confirmed to this position, will soon be your predecessors, prior occupants of the position to which you've been nominated and to which Mr. Patel has been nominated, don't worry, we have good people. Don't worry, we have good systems in place. Don't worry, it's as good as a warrant requirement, the internal approval procedure that we have within our system. And yet we've found out time and time again that this has happened, by some accounts, hundreds of thousands of times these things have been accessed where searches for an American citizen's private communications that have been intercepted and stored through incidental collection have been searched without those safeguards being met, including instances where people just wanted to check on, to cite one example, whether his father was cheating on his mother, or in other instances, doing background checks on someone looking to lease an apartment that he owned and was looking to rent out. This is unacceptable and we've got to fix it.

Speaking of unacceptable, we have seen over the last few years the weaponization of government, specifically within the Department of Justice, against law-abiding Americans—law-abiding Americans whose offense was something along the lines of, you know, them exercising their constitutional rights, ranging from Catholics attempting to practice their faith, to parents showing up to school board meetings, to people showing up to engage in peaceful protesting outside of abortion clinics. As Attorney General, how will you prevent the weaponization of the Department of Justice against Americans?

Ms. BONDI. And, Senator, you just gave the classic example of what's been happening regarding the weaponization. Going after parents at a school board meeting has got to stop. For practicing your religion, sending informants into Catholic churches must stop. We have——

Senator LEE. What about branding parents as domestic terrorists or trying to incarcerate one's political opponent as a sitting President of the United States?

Ms. BONDI. Will stop. Must stop, Senator.

Senator LEE. Exactly the sort of answer I was hoping and expecting to receive from you, and I look forward to doing everything I can to help get you confirmed. I've been pleased with your answers thus far. I've enjoyed knowing you, considering you a friend for many years, and look forward to the great things you will do as Attorney General of the United States. You have my emphatic support and my vote.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you, Senator.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Attorney General Bondi, and to your family and supporters.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you.

Senator COONS. Thank you for your service, and I look forward to our conversation today. I have a simple three-factor test when considering the executive branch nominees before us: Do you have the qualifications and experience to do the job, policy views to do the job in the best interest of the American people, and the character and integrity to conduct your job, and yours, in particular, with the independence that the role requires? You demonstrably have the relevant experience. I understand we will not see eye to eye on some or even many policies, but we had a constructive conversation last week about our shared interests in fighting the opioid epidemic, countering human trafficking, criminal justice reform, and supporting law enforcement. But I need to know that you share a core value: ensuring the Department of Justice remains free from partisan or political influence, in particular, by the White House. So I look forward to our discussion about that today.

As Attorney General, if confirmed, who would be your client?

Ms. BONDI. My oath would be to support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America. The people of America would be my client, and it is also my job to advise the President. My client are the people of America.

Senator COONS. A simple question of constitutional interpretation, is President-elect Trump eligible to run for another term as President in 2028?

Ms. BONDI. No, Senator, not unless they change the Constitution.

Senator COONS. Thank you. One of the concerns I've raised with you is safeguarding the Department of Justice's independence in the face of some promises on the campaign trail by then-candidate Trump that he would use the Department to target his political adversaries—or that he might interfere with prosecution. What would you do if your career DOJ prosecutors came to you with a case to prosecute grounded in the facts and law, but the White House directs you to drop the case?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, if I thought that would happen, I would not be sitting here today. That will not happen. Will not happen. Every case will be prosecuted based on the facts and the law that is applied in good faith. Period. Politics have got to be taken out of this system.

Senator COONS. I agree with you.

Ms. BONDI. This Department has been weaponized for years and years and years—

Senator COONS. Let me, if I might—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. And it has to stop.

Senator COONS. Thank you. Let me, if I might, Madam Attorney General, refer you back to Senator Durbin's opening comments about previous Attorneys General—our former colleague, Jeff Sessions, Bill Barr. I don't think it's credible to say that it may never happen that the President-elect would direct an unethical or illegal act. I think both of those Attorneys General found themselves crosswise with the then-President by doing things he didn't welcome or approve of. Just answer the question for me, if you would.

I know you may not expect it, I know you wouldn't have accepted this nomination if you thought it possible, but let's imagine that once again, President-elect Trump issues a directive or order to you or to the FBI Director that is outside the boundaries of ethics or law. What will you do?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I will never speak on a hypothetical, especially one saying that the President would do something illegal. What I can tell you is my duty, if confirmed as the Attorney General, will be to the Constitution and the United States of America, and the most important oath—part of that oath that I will take are the last four words, “So help me God.”

Senator COONS. Given the importance of that oath, I hope you can understand the importance of repeated questions from some of us about the importance of having independence in the Department of Justice. It has a long tradition of independent special prosecutors, especially to handle high-profile or often political cases. If you got credible evidence of a criminal violation by a White House official, including even the President, would you bring in a special prosecutor?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, that's a hypothetical. I can tell you what I do know is special prosecutors have been abused in the past on both sides. We have seen that for many, many years. They have cost the taxpayers countless dollars—countless, and I will look at each situation on a case-by-case basis, and consult the appropriate career ethics officials within the Department to make that decision.

Senator COONS. Attorney General, do you think special counsels need to be confirmed by the Senate?

Ms. BONDI. I will follow the law, and I will consult with the appropriate ethics officials regarding the law. Right now, they do not need to be Senate confirmed, of course.

Senator COONS. But you did sign an Eleventh Circuit brief arguing that they should be.

Ms. BONDI. I will follow the law, Senator. That's why I said that.

Senator COONS. Understood, but I was just getting to the clarity about the difference—

Ms. BONDI. Absolutely.

Senator COONS [continuing]. Between a position you've advocated and what the current law is. Thank you for that. Look, bluntly, to me, refusing to answer a hypothetical when there is clear and concrete previous history raises some concerns for me. I think Chris Wray has done an outstanding job as FBI Director at avoiding political pressure. And although he was chosen by President Trump, he's being driven out so that he can be replaced—my perception, I've not yet met with Mr. Patel—by a loyalist who has publicly said he will do what the President asks him. Given that Attorney General Barr was asked to go find evidence of election interference and improprieties, went and looked for the evidence and said I can't find any, and was then dismissed, I'm just going to ask you one last time, can you clarify for me that in following ethics and the law, you'd be willing to resign if ordered to do something improper?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I wouldn't work at a law firm, I wouldn't be a prosecutor, I wouldn't be Attorney General, if anyone asked me to do something improper and I felt I had to carry that out. Of course I would not do that. That's one of the main things you learn

when you're a young prosecutor is to do the right thing, and I believe that has continued with me throughout my very long career.

Senator COONS. As we discussed, protecting American invention and innovation, American intellectual property, is a real concern of mine and of several others on this Committee. I look forward to talking with you about that pressing concern. But the most important question I had for you today is whether you will be willing and able to stand up to politicization and interference in the Department of Justice, and I look forward to further clarification from you about the specifics of that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you, Senator.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Thank you. Senator Cruz would be next, but he's not here, so I call on Senator Kennedy.

Senator KENNEDY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Bondi, welcome. Congratulations. Can we agree that legitimacy is important to America's criminal justice system?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator.

Senator KENNEDY. Can we agree that legitimacy is important to the Department of Justice, which, in part, administers our criminal justice system?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator.

Senator KENNEDY. And if Americans come to believe that our criminal justice system or our Department of Justice is acting illegitimately, that makes Americans less likely to accept the results of that system. Does it not?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator.

Senator KENNEDY. And that makes Americans less likely to follow the substantive laws that we pass that are administered by the Department of Justice. Isn't that true?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator.

Senator KENNEDY. And if that happens, we have chaos. Don't we?

Ms. BONDI. Chaos.

Senator KENNEDY. And the social contract is breached. Isn't it?

Ms. BONDI. Yes.

Senator KENNEDY. Do you remember a person by the name of Michael Avenatti?

Ms. BONDI. Yes.

Senator KENNEDY. Several years ago he was a media star here in Washington.

Ms. BONDI. An attorney. Correct?

Senator KENNEDY. Yes. He was a media star, and many members of our media loved him because he persistently bashed Donald Trump, and he was on TV every day. He was on CNN more than Wolf Blitzer. Do you know where Mr. Avenatti is today?

Ms. BONDI. I believe he's sitting in prison, Senator.

Senator KENNEDY. He's in jail because he was a crook, and the Department of Justice helped put him there. Didn't it?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator.

Senator KENNEDY. Do you remember a gentleman by the name of Sam Bankman-Fried?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator.

Senator KENNEDY. Boy genius, so smart and so powerful that he thought he could command the tides—



Ms. BONDI. Mm-hmm.

Senator KENNEDY [continuing]. So smart and so powerful and so rich that he would go to meetings with serious people, like Bill Clinton, like Tony Blair, looking like a slob, looking like a fourth runner-up to a John Belushi lookalike contest, and he thought it was cute. Where's Mr. Bankman-Fried today?

Ms. BONDI. I believe he is in prison. And I believe that's from the Netflix series I saw, as well.

Senator KENNEDY. Mm-hmm, because he's a crook, and who helped put him there?

Ms. BONDI. The Department of Justice, Senator.

Senator KENNEDY. Can we agree that there's some really, really good men and women at the Department of Justice?

Ms. BONDI. Many, many great men and women in the Justice Department, as well, Senator, as all the law enforcement agencies that fall within the Department of Justice. They're out there risking their lives, especially the law enforcement officers, every single day.

Senator KENNEDY. Can we agree, though, that there have been and may be today some bad people at the Department of Justice?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator.

Senator KENNEDY. We don't know for sure because for the last 4 years, the curtains there have been tightly drawn, but I think some, a minority of people there have delegitimized America's criminal justice system. The most destabilizing act that I saw in the past 4 years, maybe in the history of the Department, is when Attorney General Garland decided on the basis of dubious facts and untested legal theories to criminally prosecute a former President of the United States. And not only that—this is, this is the special part—he decided to do it after the former President of the United States had announced that he was going to run against Attorney General Garland's boss. Didn't he?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, are you referring to going after a political opponent?

Senator KENNEDY. I think so. Now, this is one person's opinion. That kind of stupid takes a plan, and I say that because, number one, this is America. That had never happened before in America. That's the sort of thing that happens in a country whose Powerball Jackpot is 287 chickens and a goat. It doesn't happen here, and I call it stupid because it broke the seal. It broke the seal. It normalized it. There are a lot of ambitious prosecutors in America, Democrat and Republican, and I'll bet you right now there's some prosecutor in a particular State thinking about, well, maybe I ought to file criminal charges against President Biden's inner circle for conspiring to conceal his mental decline. And that's the road we're headed down, and you've got to fix it, counselor. You've got to fix it.

And here's, in my judgment, what I would ask you to do: Find out who the bad guys are and the bad women and get rid of them, find out who the good people are and lift them up, but do it on the basis of facts and evidence and fairness, because the temptation of some people is going to be they're going to tell you, look, two wrongs don't make a right, but they do make it even. Don't resist—

resist that temptation. Help us restore legitimacy to the Department of Justice.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you, Senator.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Blumenthal.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Ms. Bondi, and to your family.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you for visiting with me in my office, and I have to say I'm sympathetic, always, to a former Attorney General, particularly having been one myself, but I am, I have to say also, really troubled, deeply disturbed by some of your responses and nonresponses to the questions that you've been asked today. You say the right things, that you're going to be the people's lawyer—that's what you have to say to be here—but I believe being the people's lawyer means you have to be able to say no to the President of the United States. You have to speak truth to power. You have to be able to say that Donald Trump lost the 2020 election. You dodged that question when you were asked directly by Senator Durbin. You have to be able to say that January 6 insurrectionists who committed violence shouldn't be pardoned. You have to be able to say that a nominee for the FBI Director who says he has an enemy list—and that's just the beginning of what he has said in terms of politicizing, deeply weaponizing the FBI against political opponents—that he shouldn't be the FBI Director.

You know, we have some history here with your predecessors—Barr, Sessions, and others—who perhaps sincerely, when they sat where you are now, said that they would say no, but they were working with a President that expected them to be his Roy Cohn, his personal attorney. Do you really think that you can avoid the disgrace that they encountered or the repercussions from the White House if you say no to the President? And so my question to you is, can you say no to the President of the United States when he asks you to do something unethical or illegal?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, first I need to clarify something that you said, that I have to sit up here and say these things. No, I don't. I sit up here and speak the truth. I'm not going to sit up here and say anything that I need to say to get confirmed by this body. I don't have to say anything. I will answer the questions to the best of my ability and honestly.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Let me ask you, an individual who says that he is going to, quote, "come after," unquote, people he alleges "helped Joe Biden rigged the Presidential elections," that he has a list of people who are part of this deep state who should be prosecuted, that he's going to close down the FBI building on his first day in office, is that a person who appropriately should be the FBI Director?

Ms. BONDI. They—

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Aren't those comments inappropriate? Shouldn't you disavow them and ask him to recant them?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I am not familiar with all those comments. I have not discussed those comments with Mr. Patel. What I do know—

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Well, I'm asking you—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Is, Mr. Patel was—

Senator BLUMENTHAL [continuing]. For your view——

Ms. BONDI. Excuse me, what I do know is Mr. Patel was a career prosecutor, he was a career public defender defending people, and he also has great experience within the Intelligence Community. What I can sit here and tell you is Mr. Patel, if he works running the FBI, if he is confirmed and if I am confirmed, he will follow the law if I am the Attorney General of the United States of America, and I don't believe he would do anything otherwise.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Well, let me just submit that the response that I would've hoped to hear from you is that those comments are inappropriate and that you will ask him to disavow or recant them when he comes before this Committee because they are indeed chilling to fair enforcement and the rule of law.

Let me ask you on another topic. When we met, I welcomed your support to the goals of the Kids Online Safety Act, and Senator Blackburn and I have spent a lot of time, devoted a lot of effort to the passage of the Kids Online Safety Act, which happened by an overwhelming vote of 91-to-3, 72 Co-Sponsors, including Vice President-elect Vance. I appreciated our discussion and your support for Protecting Kids Online when we met last week. I'm hopeful that this area is one where we can work together. Can we count on your support in working together to protect kids online?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, absolutely, and thank you for that legislation, and Senator Blackburn. I believe in this world right now, we have to find the things we have in common, and that is certainly one of them, Senator, protecting our children from online predators. You've done so much on that front, and I thank you. I tried—I attempted to do that, as well, when I was Attorney General, but I am committed to working with you on anything we can do to protect our children throughout this country.

When I was Attorney General, we started something called From Instant Message to Instant Nightmare and educating parents about online predators. And that also, Senator, is one of the core functions of the FBI, the Cyber Unit. They sit there—these agents sit there all day long and investigate child predators. We tell parents constantly——

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Ms. Bondi——

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. You think you're talking to another child——

Senator BLUMENTHAL [continuing]. I apologize——

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. And you're not.

Senator BLUMENTHAL [continuing]. I'm going to interrupt you.

Ms. BONDI. Sure.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. I welcome your positive response. I have——

Ms. BONDI. Oh, go ahead.

Senator BLUMENTHAL [continuing]. One more question that I'm going to try to fit into this round.

Ms. BONDI. Sure.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. TikTok will be banned unless it is sold because it has become a tool for the Chinese to collect information and do surveillance and endanger our national security. Can you commit that you will enforce that law promptly and effectively? And I ask this question because President Trump's pick for your

Solicitor General in the Department of Justice went to the United States Supreme Court arguing that the ban should be delayed. Will you commit to enforce that law on your first day when you are—if you are confirmed?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, as I discussed with you during our meeting, that is pending litigation within the Department of Justice.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Well, it's pending litigation, but will you enforce that law?

Ms. BONDI. I can't discuss pending litigation, but I will—I will talk to all the career prosecutors—

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Well, again—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Who are handling the case. Absolutely, Senator, talk—

[Gavel is tapped.]

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Discuss with them.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Tillis.

Senator TILLIS. Ms. Bondi, thank you for being here. I think I told you when we met—thank you for the time we met—I was born in Florida, have a lot of friends and family, and follow Florida politics pretty closely, and you've had a very impressive career there, though I do also have to admit, I'm a Gator hater. So—

Ms. BONDI. Oh.

Senator TILLIS [continuing]. For the Florida alum, I'm University of Tennessee.

But anyway, actually, in some of these hearings, I created a bingo card to see what some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle were going to hit. I want to go back to a few of them really quickly. One was about you being a lobbyist, paid for and on the payroll of Qatar. Would you mind going back and repeating what you said in case people did not hear the involvement of your law firm and precisely what you were doing for the Government of Qatar?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator. I was very proud of that work. It was anti-human trafficking in advance of the World Cup, and human trafficking has been something that's been very important to me my entire career, especially when I was Attorney General for the State of Florida.

Senator TILLIS. You also made it clear that you had a number of practitioners within the firm working on it. So this narrative that you were getting \$115,000 a month from Qatar is correct or not?

Ms. BONDI. Not correct.

Senator TILLIS. Okay. Thank you. I want to talk a little bit about—well, first off, I want to go back. You should be happy that so many comments have been directed toward Kash Patel, whose confirmation I am supporting—in fact, I'm meeting with him today—because that means they're out of stuff for you. So if it comes up again, you will once again know that you've got a great reputation and a great résumé, and they are just trying to find things to put your integrity into question. You have answered the question repeatedly that you're—that you will be loyal to the Constitution, and you will live up to the oath to the Constitution, and to protecting the American people. And I think Mr. Patel, when he

comes here, he'll be able to get rid of the myth in the same way that you did as a lobbyist for Qatar, he'll be able to get rid of that list of the enemies, that he'll be able to deal with the enemy's list, and the marketing department for your opposition is going to have to come up with new material because that stuff is getting old.

Section 702. You heard Senator Lee talk about some concerns that he has with 702. I believe it's one of the most important things that you can do early into your confirmation. You will be confirmed and hopefully with some Democrat support. That there have been dramatic reforms to 702. I've sat through an extensive presentation to try and make sure that the abuses never occur again and that you have a throat to choke if somebody abuses the protocol that's in place. I believe that we need to codify a lot of that. As a matter of fact, when I went through it, I felt like there were so many blinding flashes of the obvious. How could this not have already been a part of the approval matrix?

So can you, after you're confirmed, commit that you or a designee will come back and provide for this Committee an update on all of the protocols that have changed and recommended legislation for codifying so that when we do go to reauthorization, we'll have what we need to make sure that that program stays in place?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I or a designee will review all of 702 before it terms, of course, in 2026, and come back and report to you, on both sides of the aisle.

Senator TILLIS. Thank you. You have a great perspective with your time in the State and working with the Department of Justice. Give me an idea of things that we need to do better in terms of, and I'm talking primarily in the law enforcement role. I think many people don't understand the joint task forces, the law enforcement efforts that are going every single day in every one of our States. What an incredible job they do. So can you give me some sense of things that you would look at to say maybe we could do it better from your perspective of having been a prosecutor in Florida?

Ms. BONDI. Yes. Thank you, Senator. Yes, having been a career prosecutor, I think I have a unique perspective because I was a State prosecutor, of course, prior to becoming Attorney General. So I worked on a daily basis with local law enforcement and State and Federal—not daily with Federal, but I worked consistently with State, local, and Federal. Then when I was Attorney General, I worked with all three, as well. I feel like we have to have better coordination among all our agencies, especially given all the terrorism issues that we've discussed earlier in this hearing. We have to wrap in and communicate better with our local and State law enforcement officers throughout this country. There are so many great men and women in law enforcement. We have to—I don't know exactly how yet, but we have to figure out a better way to work together with the Federal authorities.

Senator TILLIS. Thank you, and I'm going to do a second round, as well, but I think I also checked the Bingo card for election denier. There were some people, you know, that seemed to suggest that you were denying the election. I think that you said that President Biden is our President?

Ms. BONDI. President Biden is the President of the United States of America, and President Trump will be the 47th President.

Senator TILLIS. But I think you made a point that, or at least I inferred from a comment that you made, a very important point. Folks, there are election improprieties in every election. The question is a matter of scale and whether or not you can prove it. We've seen it in North Carolina and seen it in other places. It's one of the reasons why I support voter ID because we want to make elections easy to vote and hard to cheat, but the fact of the matter is people are cheating. So if anybody on this dais suggests that there aren't irregularities in every election, then they need to spend more time at home and really studying the facts. I don't think, though, that you've said that Biden is an illegitimate President. In fact, I think you said just the opposite. He is the President of the United States, and President Trump will be the next President. Right?

Ms. BONDI. Yes.

Senator TILLIS. Okay. Last thing before the second round, January 6th. A lot of people are going to say you're going to have a rubber stamp for letting people have pardons or recommending a pardon for people who did violence to law enforcement. I'm not going to ask you a hypothetical because I want you to be consistent in not answering them. But I have to believe, as a Member—I was the last Member out of the Senate on January 6th. I walked past a lot of law enforcement officers—excuse me—who were injured. I find it hard to believe that the President of the United States or you would look at facts that were used to convict the violent people on January 6th and say it was just an intemperate moment. I don't even expect you to respond to that, but I think it's an absurd and unfair hypothetical here, and you probably haven't heard the last of it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Before I call on Senator Hirono, after her and Cruz's testimony, then we'll take a lunch break, and that break will be for 30 minutes. And I can't control when my Senators come back, but I expect you to be back after 30 minutes, and I'll be here.

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Chairman.

Chairman GRASSLEY. And then I may leave the meeting to open the Senate, so whoever's on our side is acting Chairman during that period of time. Senator Hirono.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As part of my responsibility to ensure the fitness of all nominees, I ask the following two initial questions. First, since you became a legal adult, have you ever made unwanted requests for sexual favors or committed any verbal or physical harassment or assault of a sexual nature?

Ms. BONDI. No, Senator.

Senator HIRONO. Have you ever faced discipline or entered into a settlement relating to this kind of conduct?

Ms. BONDI. No, Senator.

Senator HIRONO. Ms. Bondi, I am focused on two things in my evaluation of President-elect Trump's nominees. The first is whether the nominee is qualified and experienced enough to do the job. The second is the fitness to serve, which includes putting loyalty to the Constitution over loyalty to the President. Unfortunately, in

my view, many of President-elect Trump's nominees are lacking in at least one of these two requirements. Ms. Bondi, your experience as a prosecutor is the kind of thing we would expect to see in a nominee for Attorney General, but I do have questions and concerns about potential conflicts of interest, about whether you will keep DOJ's law enforcement responsibilities independent of the President's political whims, and about whether you will let facts and evidence guide your decisions. So let's start with the importance of facts, which you say is important.

Ms. Bondi, we want an Attorney General who bases decisions on facts, so I want to ask you a factual question. Who won the 2020 Presidential election?

Ms. BOND. Joe Biden is the President of the United States.

Senator HIRONO. Ms. Bondi, you know that there is a difference between acknowledging it. You know, I can say that Donald Trump won the 2024 election. I may not like it, but I can say it. You cannot say who won the 2020 Presidential election. It's disturbing that you can't give voice to that fact.

Moving on to DOJ's independence from politics, Ms. Bondi, if you are confirmed as Attorney General, you will take an oath to the Constitution and not to any individual, including the President. To start, I'd like to know whether you agree with some of the statements President-elect Trump made during the election, during the campaign.

First, are the felons convicted of breaking into the Capitol on January 6 hostages or "patriots"—quoting Trump—as President-elect Trump has said repeatedly? Do you agree with his characterization of the felons that I referred to?

Ms. BOND. I am not familiar with that statement, Senator.

Senator HIRONO. I just familiarized you with that statement. Do you agree with that statement?

Ms. BOND. I'm not familiar with it, Senator.

Senator HIRONO. No answer. He has also said, "Illegal immigration is poisoning the blood of our Nation." He said that in December 2023. Do you agree with that statement?

Ms. BOND. Senator, I am not familiar with that statement, but what I can tell you is I went to the Border a few months ago. I went to Yuma, Arizona, and what I saw at that border was horrific, Senator. It was horrific—

Senator HIRONO. Ms. Bondi—

Ms. BOND. [continuing]. I went to a rape crisis center.

Senator HIRONO [continuing]. That is not my question.

Ms. BOND. If I can finish, I went to a rape crisis center—

Senator HIRONO. Let me—

Ms. BOND. Well, I'm not familiar with the statement—

Senator HIRONO [continuing]. Get to the next—

Ms. BOND. [continuing]. But I went to a rape crisis center—

Senator HIRONO [continuing]. Let me get to—

Ms. BOND. [continuing]. I met with Border Patrol agents.

Senator HIRONO [continuing]. The next question I have.

Ms. BOND. I'm sure you've been to the Border—

Senator HIRONO. Ms. Bondi—

Ms. BOND. [continuing]. As well—

Senator HIRONO [continuing]. I want to get to my next question.

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. So you can answer that.

Senator HIRONO. So, I believe that you responded to a question from Senator Whitehouse, and let me get your response again. You said that the White House—if I'm putting words in your mouth, correct me—oh, you said that the White House will play no role in investigative or charging decisions in the DOJ. Is that correct?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, what I said is that it is the Department of Justice's decision to determine what cases—

Senator HIRONO. What—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Will be prosecuted.

Senator HIRONO [continuing]. What role will the White House have in investigative or prosecutorial decisions of the DOJ?

Ms. BONDI. It is the Department of Justice's decision, Senator.

Senator HIRONO. So that sounds to me that you're saying that the White House will not have any kind of role. Meanwhile, though, you have an incoming President who said, I have the absolute right to do what I want to do with the Justice Department, and, in fact, President-elect Trump considers the DOJ to be his law firm. I'll ask you this. If President-elect Trump asks, suggests, or hints that you, as Attorney General, should investigate one of his perceived political enemies, would you do so?

[Video and audio malfunctions occur.]

Ms. BONDI. Senator Hirono, I wish you had met with me. Had you met with me, we could have discussed many things. You could've gotten to know me.

Senator HIRONO. I'm listening to you now. Could you respond to the question?

Ms. BONDI. Yes. You were the only one who refused to meet with me, Senator, but what we would've discussed is that it is the job of the Attorney General—

Senator HIRONO. I'm very happy—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. To follow the law.

Senator HIRONO [continuing]. To listen to your responses under oath, Ms. Bondi. So I think it's really important to us that the Attorney General be independent of the White House, and you have a President-elect who considers the AG's office his law firm. I would like to know whether, if the President suggests, hints, asks that you, as Attorney General, should investigate one of his perceived enemies, what would you do?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I certainly have not heard the President say that, but what I will tell you is two-thirds of Americans have lost faith in the Department of Justice, and it's statements like that, I believe—

Senator HIRONO. Ms. Bondi—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. That make people continue to lose faith. If I am confirmed as Attorney General, it will be my job—

Senator HIRONO. Getting to my next question—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. To not only keep America safe—

Senator HIRONO. You're not responding—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. But restore—but restore integrity to that Department—

Senator HIRONO. Why don't we move on—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. And that's what I plan on doing—

Senator HIRONO [continuing]. To something that you said.



Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Every single day as Attorney General.  
[Video and audio malfunctions occur.]

Senator HIRONO. On August 25, 2025, on Fox News, you said, “When Republicans take back the White House, the Department of Justice, the prosecutors will be prosecuted, the bad ones. The investigators will be investigated.” Ms. Bondi, is Jack Smith one of those bad prosecutors that you will prosecute as AG?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, you hesitated a bit when I said, the bad ones. Every decision will be made——

Senator HIRONO. Sometimes badness is in the eye of the beholder. I’m just asking whether you would consider Jack Smith——

Ms. BONDI. Senator——

Senator HIRONO [continuing]. To be one of the people. How about Liz Cheney?

Ms. BONDI. Senator——

Senator HIRONO. How about Merrick Garland?

Ms. BONDI. I am not going to answer hypotheticals. No one has been prejudged nor will anyone be prejudged——

Senator HIRONO. I am asking whether these are the kind of people——

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. If I am confirmed.

Senator HIRONO [continuing]. These are, in fact, the people that you would prosecute. I’m not getting an answer.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Your time is up. Would you like to——

Senator HIRONO. My time is——

Chairman GRASSLEY. Would you like to respond?

Senator HIRONO. Mr. Chairman, she is clearly not going to answer that question, so let me get on to——

Chairman GRASSLEY. Would you like to——

Senator HIRONO. I do have questions for the second round.

Chairman GRASSLEY. You’ll get—you’ll have a second round. Would you like to speak before I call on Senator Cruz?

Ms. BONDI. No, sir. Thank you.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Okay. Senator Cruz.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General Bondi, welcome.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you for your long career in public service, and thank you for your willingness to take on this incredibly important office.

You know, I have to say, I don’t know there is a more important position in this new administration than the position to which you have been nominated, Attorney General of the United States. I thought the exchange just a moment ago with Senator Hirono was illustrative. She asked you how you would respond if the President asked you to target his political enemies. It’s rather striking because it’s not a hypothetical. It has happened over the last 4 years, and I think perhaps the most tragic legacy of the Biden-Harris administration has been the politicization and the weaponization of the United States Department of Justice. And we don’t need to ask hypothetically because Joe Biden publicly mused and allowed The New York Times to report it, calling on Merrick Garland, why will he not prosecute Trump more quickly. And Merrick Garland, sadly, he sat in that chair and promised to be apolitical, and he broke

that promise almost the instant he walked into the Department of Justice.

If you look on the west pediment of the Supreme Court of the United States, just above the entrance, there's a simple yet profound forward phrase, "Equal Justice Under Law." We have seen over the last 4 years a Department of Justice that systematically targeted the political opponents of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris and that systematically protected his friends and allies, and it is tragic to see the loss of confidence in the American people in the Department of Justice and in the FBI. I would note, I don't think there's an institution in America who has lost more respect from the American people than the FBI has in the last 4 years. That is a grotesque violation of the obligation of the Department of Justice and the FBI.

So I want to start with just a very simple question. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, will you pledge to fairly and faithfully uphold the law, regardless of party?

Ms. BONDI. So help me God.

Senator CRUZ. Amen. Look, and I want to be clear for folks at home. I don't want a Republican Department of Justice. I don't want a Democrat Department of Justice. I want a Department of Justice that follows the damn law, and I think the American people do, too. That shouldn't be too much to expect.

Now, I'm grateful to President Trump for nominating you. I think on any objective level, you're clearly qualified for this position. You have been a prosecutor for decades. You have been the elected Attorney General of the State of Florida, the third largest State in America, for 8 years. Let me ask you, in terms of your practice, how many criminal cases over the course of your career have you personally handled?

Ms. BONDI. Handled? Thousands.

Senator CRUZ. How many of those were before a jury?

Ms. BONDI. Hundreds. I don't want to overstate, but hundreds. I was in a courtroom for many years. I tried four when I was an intern, jury trials. I think you had to try at least 20 in misdemeanor before you went to felony, then you were in court every day, and I was also lead trial attorney for many years, trying many cases, so.

Senator CRUZ. And how many of those cases would've been before a judge?

Ms. BONDI. Oh, hundreds and hundreds, as well, but hundreds before a jury, I would assume.

Senator CRUZ. And as Attorney General of Florida, how many lawyers did you supervise roughly?

Ms. BONDI. Approximately 400, Senator.

Senator CRUZ. Now, I also want to clarify something. During the course of this hearing, several Democrat Senators have referred to you as President Trump's, quote, "personal lawyer." Now, I don't believe that is an accurate characterization. As I understand it, you represented President Trump as a White House special advisor during his first impeachment trial. Is that correct?

Ms. BONDI. Within Office of White House Counsel, yes, Senator.

Senator CRUZ. And is working within the White House Counsel's office different than representing Donald J. Trump individually as his personal lawyer?

Ms. BONDI. Absolutely.

Senator CRUZ. How's it different?

Ms. BONDI. You're working for the Government. You're working for the Office of White House Counsel. You're not representing him in his personal capacity.

Senator CRUZ. And so you have not represented him in his business affairs, in his personal life, or in any of the criminal trials he has faced?

Ms. BONDI. No, Senator.

Senator CRUZ. And, you know, when it comes to weaponization, it's worth noting that in more than 2 centuries of our Nation's history, no President had previously been indicted, no President had previously been prosecuted until the Biden-Harris White House came along. And in the last 4 years, we've seen Donald Trump indicted and prosecuted not once, not twice, not 3 times, but 4 separate times.

Ms. BONDI. And two assassination attempts, Senator.

Senator CRUZ. I have to say, Javert from "Les Mis" would be chagrined at the efforts of Democrats to do anything possible to take him down. And I believe the real target in this was not President Trump, but it was the American people, that these prosecutions were brought because partisan prosecutors were terrified that the American people would do exactly what they did in November 2024 and vote to reelect Donald J. Trump.

Ms. BONDI. By 77.3 percent million Americans—77.3 million Americans.

Senator CRUZ. Will you commit every day as Attorney General to follow the law, to follow the Constitution, to uphold the rule of law without favor and without regard to the partisan position of any criminal defendant?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator.

Senator CRUZ. That's what we should all expect from an Attorney General. Thank you.

Chairman GRASSLEY. We'll now recess for 30-minute lunch break. That means we'll be back at 12:25, and when we resume, Senator Booker will be recognized to ask his questions.

[Whereupon the hearing was recessed and reconvened.]

Chairman GRASSLEY. Since Senators that would've been called on before the Senator from Vermont, I'm going to ask him to start the questioning so we don't waste any time.

Senator WELCH. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for this hearing. Ms. Bondi, thank you so much for the visit to my office.

A couple of things. First of all, congratulations on the nomination, and number two, a couple of Vermont things that we talked about. We're going to have a new U.S. attorney in the State of Vermont, and in the last Trump administration, the Justice Department and the Trump administration worked closely with Senator Leahy, Democrat, and with Governor Scott, Republican, and came up with a consensus choice. And I seek your assistance in helping make sure that we are successful in getting a very competent U.S. attorney in Vermont and, hopefully, with the coopera-

tion of Governor Scott, a Republican, as I mentioned, and Senator Sanders, and me.

Ms. BONDI. And, Senator, as I discussed with you in our meeting, I look forward to working with you and cooperating with you and learning about many of the issues you have in Vermont.

Senator WELCH. Thank you. And then on that, by the way, one of the issues we talked about, we are one of two States that does not have a residential reentry program. That is outrageous in my mind. I know you worked on the First Step Act, but our Federal judges, our Federal prosecutors, our Federal public defender are all in support of a residential reentry program. Our State and Hawaii are the only two States without it and our justice system and officials believe that we need it, and I seek your energetic assistance in helping us get that residential reentry program.

Ms. BONDI. Can I address that, Senator?

Senator WELCH. Yes, I'd like you to. Thank you.

Ms. BONDI. Yes. Senator, when I was a prosecutor, and those are so vitally important. One thing that I just learned is the Bureau of Prisons—98 percent of people in the Bureau of Prisons will be released. They're not—

Senator WELCH. Right.

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Serving life sentences, so we must do everything we can when people are in prison to help rehabilitate them for when they get out, and that's why reentry is so—

Senator WELCH. That's really—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Vital.

Senator WELCH [continuing]. Helpful.

Ms. BONDI. But we tell people—

Senator WELCH. Right.

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Get out of prison and become a productive member of society, go get a job, yet people don't know how to go find a driver's license.

Senator WELCH. Well, I appreciate your help on that.

Ms. BONDI. They don't know how to get to work.

Senator WELCH. Thank you very much—

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator.

Senator WELCH [continuing]. And I have confidence that you will do that, given your history on the First Step Act and other things that you did. The next—I do have some concerns, not so much about you, but what President Trump has said about a desire on his part to go after what he considers to be political adversaries. You know, he's—his own words—

[Poster is displayed.]

Senator WELCH [continuing]. For instance, says that if he's elected, he'd seek to appoint a special prosecutor to go after Joe Biden. I assume you've had no discussion with President-elect Trump about that?

Ms. BONDI. Absolutely not.

Senator WELCH. And he—

Ms. BONDI. Nor against Senator Schiff. I'm looking at your next one.

[Laughter.]

Senator WELCH. Well, my colleague, Senator Schiff, who I think did an incredibly good job, President Biden had different points—

or pardon me—President Trump had different views about that where he said on a number of occasions that he should be prosecuted—everybody on the January 6 Committee should be prosecuted for their lies and treason. No discussion about that?

Ms. BOND. No, Senator.

Senator WELCH. And Liz Cheney, also, he said that she should be prosecuted for lies and treason, as well.

Ms. BOND. We have had no discussions about Liz Cheney.

Senator WELCH. All right. And you've satisfied me that this is not an agenda you have. President Trump has satisfied me that when he says things that are pretty provocative, he's often serious. And, as Senator Cruz wants, I want, and that is to have a Justice Department that is not going after people on the basis of them being political opponents. And my understanding, in listening to your answers to the questions along this line, is that you have no intention—no intention of pursuing people on the basis of them being a political opponent.

Ms. BOND. No one will be prosecuted, investigated because they are a political opponent. That's what we've seen for the last 4 years in this administration.

Senator WELCH. Well, I—

Ms. BOND. People will be prosecuted based on the facts and the law and fairly, Senator.

Senator WELCH. That's good.

Ms. BOND. You have my word.

Senator WELCH. I disagree about the characterization of the past 4 years, but we don't have to discuss that, with your assurance that the next 4 years, there'll be no effort on the part of the Justice Department to pursue political adversaries. Right?

Ms. BOND. Every case will be done on a case-by-case basis. No one should be prosecuted—

Senator WELCH. All right. Just—

Ms. BOND [continuing]. For political purposes.

Senator WELCH. Thank you.

Ms. BOND. Absolutely.

Senator WELCH. Thank you. I just have a couple of other things. One is the False Claims Act. Senator Grassley, thank you for that False Claims Act. In Vermont, there are incredible challenges for folks trying to get healthcare. It's really expensive, and there was a shocking report in The Wall Street Journal about a major insurer that is ripping off taxpayers by overbilling, over-prescribing on Medicare Advantage—billions of dollars. And the report indicated that insurers are adding diagnoses, basically, to make money, not to help the patient, that insurers sent nurses to find diagnoses that doctors didn't find, that insurers got paid to cover patients who were already getting their coverage through the VA, and it adds up to billions of dollars. And Vermonters are struggling under the weight of incredibly expensive healthcare.

The False Claims Act Senator Grassley authored is an area where the Attorney General can protect consumers against rip-offs. I'm not asking you to comment on this particular Wall Street report, but I want your assurance that in addition to fighting crime—and we're all for you doing that—you're going to be there protecting consumers and taxpayers from rip-offs.

Ms. BONDI. Absolutely, Senator. When I was Attorney General, we went after a pharmaceutical company. It was Medicaid fraud. I can't remember the settlement value. It may even be ongoing, but it was a large, large number, and that—you know, people don't understand that's—that's hurting the taxpayers of Florida, of Vermont.

Senator WELCH. So use that False Claims Act that we can thank Senator Grassley for. It's cold out there in Vermont. We need vigorous enforcement to protect taxpayers in Vermonters from rip-off charges. Thank you. I yield.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Schmitt.

Senator SCHMITT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can—it's good to see you, and I meant every word of that, those introductory remarks.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you.

Senator SCHMITT. I have the greatest deal of respect for you, personally and professionally. This is a great pick by President Trump. You're going to do a great job.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you. Thank you.

Senator SCHMITT. I do want to say, though, that it appears as though Trump derangement syndrome is alive and well. The focus of these questions today are disturbing. I don't think my Democrat colleagues learned very much from the November 5th election. The American people rejected all this, their obsession, but President Trump didn't bode well for them electorally, and I think if they stay on this path they'll be in a permanent minority—

[Poster is displayed.]

Senator SCHMITT [continuing]. But that's—

Ms. BONDI. Three-hundred and twelve electoral votes, Senator.

Senator SCHMITT. A landslide. But that's up to them to decide. I do want to comment a little bit, I guess, on this newfound religion on independence from the Attorney General. I will remind my colleagues that the last three Democratic Attorneys General for the United States of America were perhaps the most biased—politically biased AGs we've had in modern political history in the United States, and there are some receipts. Eric Holder described himself as Obama's heat shield and wingman. This Committee moved forward, and one of my colleagues referenced that the Attorney General shouldn't be the wingman of the President. Eric Holder's bragged about it. He bragged about it. Loretta Lynch met with Bill Clinton on the tarmac in a private meeting while she was investigating Hillary Clinton. And Merrick Garland probably gets, however many gold stars you want to give, for the most politicized, weaponized Department of Justice we have ever seen. And I think it's worth exploring that, and then I want to get your comment on it.

To just sort of take a step back, I think part of leadership is understanding the moment that you're in and the landscape. We've never seen anything like this, and there is a story to be told. The arc of this story begins when Joe Biden gave a speech demonizing half the country—

[Poster is displayed.]

Senator SCHMITT [continuing]. Calling them threats to the republic, threats to democracy, these MAGA Republicans, and I'm going

to do everything I can to make sure President Trump ever gets back into the White House. Miraculously, these zombie cases are resurrected, and let's talk about a couple of those.

You've got, of course, Jack Smith, the overzealous and disgraced special prosecutor, who time and time again has been slapped down by courts for overcharging and taking an overtly political position. He, by the way, in his postmortem this week even acknowledged that it was unusual for him to be tasked with going after the political opponent of the President of the United States. It didn't stop him, though. The Supreme Court did, thankfully. But you had Jack Smith take on these unprecedented actions.

You had a raid at Mar-a-Lago, staged photos at Mar-a-Lago for boxes of documents, which, by the way, boxes of documents were in Joe Biden's garage from his Senate days, and by the way, somebody who didn't register like you did under FARA, Hunter Biden was staying in. We don't know if he's compromised or not because that investigation was dropped, and give me a break that justice was meted out fairly for Hunter Biden. It wasn't. The Department of Justice went out of its way in documents to try to get him absolved of all potential crimes in the plea deal. It was only when the judge asked questions that unwound that and they got back to the gun charge. But then President Biden did the dirty work himself. It was always going to be Plan B.

You had Jonathan Su, Biden's Deputy White House Counsel, coordinated with the DOJ and Jay Bratt on those classified document cases. Matthew Colangelo—who's that? The number three guy at DOJ goes to where? Alvin Bragg's office. Alvin Bragg then resurrects a zombie case in lawfare at a local level. Why would the number three person go do that? Maybe there was coordination. Maybe there was coordination, by the way, with the number two assistant DA in Atlanta, in the Fani Willis case, who was meeting with the White House. Why would the White House care about a case in Atlanta? Well, the truth is, is everybody knows, it was on full display, this was the worst case of lawfare we've ever seen. If this was happening in another country, our State Department will be warning us about it. It's banana republic stuff.

And one of the reasons why I'm so glad that you have been put up and nominated for this position is that I think you have the ability to level set. So when the Democrats ask you questions about your independence, it is beyond ironic that we're sitting here today because of the lack of independence from Merrick Garland—and Eric Holder bragging about being Obama's wingman. So I just want to ask you—you've been asked this a bunch of times—you're going to make decisions as you always have, right, on the law, and let investigations go where they're going to go, but they're not politically motivated. Correct?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator, based on the law and the facts that apply.

Senator SCHMITT. And in my limited time, I do want to give you an opportunity to talk about some of your experience working with law enforcement as Florida's Attorney General. This is something that, you know, as you and I talked about over the years, you were known for this, the collaboration you had. And I think getting the Department of Justice back to its core function of taking on violent

crime, protecting the constitutional rights of Americans, but taking on violent crime is really important. And how you went about doing it, you've gotten bipartisan praise for that over the years. You've got the support of all these law enforcement agencies. That's something that you're going to continue and take forward into this office. Is that right?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator. Thank you so much, and I feel that my experience with that goes back to when I was a State prosecutor with State and local—our sheriffs, our police departments, our police chiefs, and then as Attorney General on a statewide basis. And now, if I'm confirmed, all of our Federal law enforcement agencies, I would be very proud to supervise those.

Senator SCHMITT. I'll just close with this, Mr. Chairman. We heard one of my Democrat colleagues ask you the question that you're not going to pursue a case because of a name, but because of the crime. I would argue that the current Department of Justice adopted Lenin's claim, which was, "Show me the man and I'll show you the crime," and they did everything they could to throw President Trump in jail for the rest of his life because they didn't want to lose at the ballot box. That is not what this country is about. That is not what this republic is about. But they did it, and it's up to you now to restore the integrity of that agency—of the Department of Justice, and I have full confidence that you will.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you, Senator.

Senator SCHMITT. Thank you.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Padilla.

Senator PADILLA. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Before I begin, I just want to remind us all for the record that the 34 convictions—not indictments—convictions of former President—incoming President Trump were by a jury of his peers. Thank you, Ms. Bondi, for being here today, and, I, too, would like to welcome your family and friends who are here.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you.

Senator PADILLA. I appreciated the opportunity to meet yesterday to learn about your priorities and discuss a number of issues that are important to me. But I got to tell you, as I reflected on our conversation yesterday, and as I've observed at the hearing today, I continue to have significant reservations on your ability to function as a truly independent Attorney General for your friend—that's how you keep referring to him, your friend President-elect Trump. So I hope you can address some of these concerns through your responses to my questions here.

Now, the first issue area is something that we didn't get a chance to touch on yesterday, so I actually want to follow up on some of Senator Durbin's questions from earlier about the 2020 election. And to be specific, on the day after the 2020 Presidential general election, you traveled to Philadelphia to appear alongside President Trump's then-attorney Rudy Giuliani, and together, you falsely asserted that President Trump had, quote, "won Pennsylvania" in that election. Now, I want to be clear at that moment, there were still at least a million ballots left to be counted in Pennsylvania. Of course, President Biden went on to win the State by more than 80,000 votes. But in the following days, even after the results were clear, you continued to double down on the Big Lie,



promoting falsehoods about election fraud and cheating without offering any actual evidence. And I remember it clearly because I served as California's Secretary of State at the time, and I invited anybody associated with the Trump campaign who was making these claims to come forward with evidence of irregularities in the election or massive voter fraud. Four years later I still have seen none.

So I ask you today, do you have any evidence of election fraud or irregularities in the 2020 election?

Ms. BONDI. So, first, Senator—

Senator PADILLA. Yes or no? It's a yes or no question.

Ms. BONDI. First, Senator—

Senator PADILLA. Do you have evidence? Yes or no?

Ms. BONDI. First, Senator—first, Senator, I'm so sorry about the fires, to you and Senator Schiff, and what you're going through in your States. I have to say that—

Senator PADILLA. I appreciate that—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. And I think all of our—

Senator PADILLA [continuing]. But my clock is ticking—

Ms. BONDI. I'll answer your question.

Senator PADILLA [continuing]. And I want to hear your answer.

Ms. BONDI. All our hearts go out to everyone in California for what you're facing right now. I'm glad you asked the question about Pennsylvania. I was hoping someone—

Senator PADILLA. It's a yes or no question.

Ms. BONDI. I was hoping someone would—

Senator PADILLA. Do you have evidence? Yes or no?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I was hoping you'd ask the question. Yes, I traveled—

Senator PADILLA. Do you have evidence? Yes or no?

Ms. BONDI. I traveled to Pennsylvania—

Senator PADILLA. Do you have evidence? Yes or no?

Ms. BONDI. I traveled, Senator, to Pennsylvania—

Senator PADILLA. Okay. You're not answering my question. If you have no evidence to offer, let me ask you this. Will you now retract your previous statements that Trump won Pennsylvania in the 2020 election? Yes or no?

Ms. BONDI. Oh, Senator, I traveled to Pennsylvania, and let me tell you what I saw firsthand.

Senator PADILLA. Yes or no?

Ms. BONDI. I didn't talk about California because I was not in California. I talked about—

Senator PADILLA. Yes or no?

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. I talked about—

Senator PADILLA. Last time I'm going to ask.

Ms. BONDI. I talked about Pennsylvania because I was there.

Senator PADILLA. Mr. Chair, I'm going to move on because she's clearly—

Ms. BONDI. We got a court order—

Senator PADILLA [continuing]. Not answering my questions.

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. To observe—

Senator PADILLA. And I want to know, colleagues—for everybody, for everybody—Members of the Committee and everybody watching, that the attorney you stood beside, Mr. Giuliani, was making

very similar statements, and he has since been disbarred from multiple jurisdictions for making these false claims about the 2020 election in court. And like Mr. Giuliani, as you've noted today, you've taken an oath to uphold the Constitution just as an attorney, and now you're asking us to consider you to serve as the chief law enforcement officer in our country. So it's imperative, Ms. Bondi, that you subscribe to facts and evidence and not politically convenient conspiracy theories. Your job will be——

Ms. BOND. Yes——

Senator PADILLA. I'm speaking. Your job will be to protect voters and election workers, not to undermine and dox them. Now I know that earlier you agreed that Joe Biden is, in fact, President but many of the President-elect's inner circle continue to spread the Big Lie about the 2020 election. Let me move on to a different topic.

Ms. BOND. Senator, you were speaking——

Senator PADILLA. I know that's one that you're not obviously not comfortable with.

Ms. BOND. May I speak? You cut me off when I was speaking.

Senator PADILLA. When I ask you the next question, you can speak, and I hope you answer it, Ms. Bondi.

Ms. BOND. Well, I'd like——

Senator PADILLA. Now, when we met yesterday——

Ms. BOND. [continuing]. To answer the previous one, Senator.

Senator PADILLA [continuing]. When we met yesterday——

Ms. BOND. You pointed your finger at me and said you were speaking.

Senator PADILLA [continuing]. You did not seem to be familiar with the——

Ms. BOND. Let me answer my question. I'm not going to be bullied by you, Senator Padilla.

Senator PADILLA [continuing]. Citizenship Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States of America, which was deeply disappointing, and——

Ms. BOND. I guess you didn't want to hear——

Senator PADILLA [continuing]. Apparently you weren't familiar with it today after——

Ms. BOND. [continuing]. My answer about Pennsylvania.

Senator PADILLA [continuing]. I gave an opportunity to study overnight. So can you tell me and this Committee what the Citizenship Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment says?

Ms. BOND. Senator, I'm here to answer your questions. I'm not here to do your homework and study for you. If I am confirmed as Attorney General——

Senator PADILLA. Oh no, you're the one asking for a confirmation——

Ms. BOND. Hey, you cut me off. Can I please finish?

Senator PADILLA. What does the Fourteenth Amendment say?

Ms. BOND. Senator? Senator, the Fourteenth Amendment, we all know, addresses birthright citizenship. I have been a State prosecutor. I have been a State AG. I look forward to, even given your remarks today, working with you and the people of California, if I am confirmed as the 87th Attorney General of the United States of America. I didn't take your homework assignment. I'm sorry.

Senator PADILLA. Okay.

Ms. BONDI. I was preparing for today.

Senator PADILLA. So on the Fourteenth Amendment—now you’ve testified repeatedly to this Committee that you will uphold the laws of this country and defend the Constitution of the United States. Do you believe birthright citizenship is the law of the land, and will you defend it regardless of a child born in the United States—regardless of their parents’ immigration status?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I will study birthright citizenship. I would love to meet with you regarding birthright citizenship.

Senator PADILLA. Ma’am, you’re asking us consider you—

Ms. BONDI. Can I answer the question?

Senator PADILLA [continuing]. As the Attorney General of the United States, and you still need to study the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution? That is not helping me have more confidence in your ability to do this job. One other immigration-related question, and I’ll steer clear of the Constitution and the law.

Ms. BONDI. I have one regarding that I’d like to talk about.

Senator PADILLA. Senator Hirono asked you earlier, but I don’t think you answered her question. Can you please tell us, do you agree with the statement that immigrants are, quote, “poisoning the blood of our country?” Yes or no?

Ms. BONDI. I did not say that.

Senator PADILLA. I did not say that you said that. I’m asking if you agree with it. Yes nor no?

Ms. BONDI. I did not say that.

Senator PADILLA. Do you agree with it? Yes or no?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, my great grandparents are immigrants.

Senator PADILLA. Do you agree with it? Yes or no?

Ms. BONDI. They came here from Sicily through Ellis Island—

Senator PADILLA. Do you agree with it? Yes or no?

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. When they were teenagers.

Senator PADILLA. Do you agree with it? Yes or no?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, let me answer the question.

Senator PADILLA. Yes or no? It’s real simple.

Ms. BONDI. My great grandparents came here, immigrated to this country from Sicily—recently went and found each of their birth certificates. We are a Nation made up of immigrants. Do I believe immigrants are poisoning our country? No, Senator

Senator PADILLA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I can’t wait for the second round.

Ms. BONDI. Same, Senator. Thank you.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Do you need any more time?

Ms. BONDI. No sir. Thank you.

Chairman GRASSLEY. There have been suggestions about—unfair statements about the 2020 election. I thought I’d remind people that Senator Schumer and former Senator Casey raised questions about the Pennsylvania Senate race just a few months ago. In 2018, numerous Senate Democrats, some of them on this Committee, claimed that the Georgia Governor’s election was stolen. In 2016, Hillary Clinton and a host of Democrats claimed the election was stolen or illegitimate and blamed Russia for the loss. And every one of my Democrat colleagues voted last month to confirm Judge Anthony Brindisi. He engaged in lengthy litigation regarding

his loss of the 2020 congressional election and did not concede until 3 months after the election. I think we all agree that our elections can be more secure and better run, but I find these lines of attack against the nominee very partisan. Senator Britt.

Senator BRITT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you so much for being here today and really glad to see your family. I had the opportunity to help them find where to come back in.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you, Senator.

Senator BRITT. They are all so excited and rightfully so, and so proud of who you are and the work that you've done. And speaking of, I think it is absolutely, completely ridiculous that anyone on the other side of the aisle would ever say that you were anything but immensely qualified for this job.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you.

Senator BRITT. From your time as a career prosecutor to then a two-time Attorney General of the third largest State, with regards to all of the people that operated underneath you, with what you were able to achieve, it is truly remarkable. The United States of America could only be so fortunate if you were confirmed and to have someone of your caliber, of your intellect, and of your experience running a department that, unfortunately, has been run into the ground. So I think that that is full-on gaslighting, which, by the way, I had to get my children to explain to me what that was.

Not only that, but to act like you would be the one that would weaponize the Department of Justice. What I have heard you say, time and time and time again, is that you will follow the law. And this is coming from a side of the aisle that has allowed the Biden administration—by saying nothing, they've allowed them to go after parents who are at school board meetings, who want nothing more than their children to be taught and not indoctrinated. They have allowed them to go after people who are trying to practice their faith, and they have set idly by while the weaponization of the Department of Justice has undermined the credibility and credence that Americans believe that they should have and equal justice under the law.

So I know that you will, as you have said here, you will follow the law and you will return this Department to where it should be in the eyes of Americans, so thank you. And I wish the gaslighting on the other side of the aisle would stop because, from my perspective, I'm over it. And I believe that's exactly what the American people have said, too.

And speaking of my distinguished colleague who I have a great deal of respect from on the other side of the aisle, just said—tried to make you answer a question about immigrants and, quote, "poisoning the blood of America," when actually the previous question by our colleague from Hawaii was illegal immigration. We are a Nation of immigrants, but we are also a Nation of laws. And the lawlessness under the Biden-Harris administration has made every single State in this Nation a border State.

I am so thrilled about what you've done when it comes to opioid use and human trafficking. I look forward to you instituting that at the Department of Justice. Your credentials speak for themselves. When opioid and fentanyl overdoses are the leading cause of death between the ages of 18 and 45 in this Nation, we need

someone who takes it serious. You not only take that serious, you have a track record of proving to the American people—you've done it for the people of Florida, and I look forward to what that means to the families that I have met. You talked about the families you've met across Florida that showed you pictures of their loved ones that they lost—their brother, their sister, their cousin, their friend, their mother. And I know that there will be more lives that are saved as a result of your service when you are confirmed. So on that I say thank you.

And when it comes to illegal immigration, which we need to put a stop to, I want to ask you a question that you and I had an opportunity to discuss a little bit. You share my desire, I know, to not only get away from the weaponization and wokeness that we are seeing in the Department right now, but really prioritizing safety and security. And I want to say thank you for that commitment and your commitment to blind justice. When we are looking at illegal immigration, the Executive Office of Immigration Review within DOJ—there have been a number of things that we have talked about with that.

And I know, as you are aware—some people call it EOIR, some people call it EOR—but it houses our Nation's immigration courts. Over the course of the Biden administration, the immigration court backlog has grown from 1.4 million at the end of 2021 to 3.5 million at the end of 2024. Over that same period, the Biden administration pursued policies both at DOJ and DHS to foster a culture within EOR of failure to adjudicate cases. As an example, between FY25 and FY24, immigration judges failed to adjudicate over 340,000 asylum claims. That is compared to just under 13,000 non-adjudicated asylum claims in the previous 6 fiscal years combined. Between cases dismissed, terminations, administrative closures, and failures to adjudicate, EOR during the Biden administration has allowed around one million illegal aliens to remain in the United States on an indefinite basis.

Now, I've heard Laken Riley brought up multiple times today. Having talked to her parents, no parent should have to go through the heartbreak and tragedy that they have. And we are working diligently to rectify that and ensure that we are keeping Americans safe and secure. But a House Judiciary Committee report on this issue appropriately called it, quote, "quiet amnesty," what we're talking here with EOR. Will you commit to me that, if confirmed, you will make it a priority to reform the way that EOR operates and put in place measures to ensure that immigration judges actually adjudicate these claims and cases?

Ms. BOND. Yes, Senator. Thank you for meeting with me in advance. And I learned so much from you about this topic, and I look forward to learning more and working with you to do everything we can to make sure that functions properly—

Senator BRITT. Thank you.

Ms. BOND [continuing]. If I am confirmed, Senator.

Senator BRITT. Thank you. Well, you are going to be confirmed because America needs you. As a part of this effort, I hope that you will consider a number of things, including reinstating the performance metrics for immigration judges, similar to that that were in place during the first Trump administration, and a reevaluation of

the Biden administration's decisions and policies that have encouraged the use of administrative closures. And I assume I have your commitment to examine those issues thoroughly.

Ms. BONDI. We'll closely examine those, Senator. Thank you.

Senator BRITT. Thank you.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Booker.

Senator BOOKER. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for the time. Ms. Bondi, thank you for being here today.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you, Senator

Senator BOOKER. And thank you for being willing to meet with me in my office. I really value that time that we had together. If there's anything that's been demonstrated in this hearing thus far is there is a serious crisis of faith in our judicial system in America. And we are at a time where, as Judge Learned Hand reminded us in his writings and speeches, is that the power of the Constitution is only strong as long as it is believed in and have faith by the American people. And that faith is shaken by so much of the political tumult, and as we have a new administration coming in and a lot of the protestations about retribution or going after political opponents, I know you could expend your empathy enough to understand why there are many that really worry about your independence. But I've heard you over and over again in this hearing, as much as I've tried to focus on it as I've gone back and forth between the Senate Foreign Relations and another Floridian, Marco Rubio. But I am hearing from you that you understand that the Attorney General's guiding star is the U.S. Constitution and her client is the American people, that there can be no argument about that.

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator.

Senator BOOKER. Yes. And more than that, though, I hope that you, should you be confirmed, understand that there is an urgency in not just demonstrating through your actions that independence, but beginning to heal this country's lack of faith and shaken faith in that independence in the U.S. Constitution. History may not long remember what any of us individually do here, but for the sake of our democracy, what you do to restore and repair the American faith, whether they be Democrats, Independents, or Republicans, is vital.

I want to switch here to say publicly that when Donald Trump appointed Craig Carpenito as the U.S. attorney in New Jersey, it was over the objections of myself and then-Senator Menendez. I was wrong in my anticipation that he would not do good things in our State. He partnered with local leaders like those in Newark, New Jersey, to dramatically drive down crime. He was good for the safety of the city in which I live and the one that I led. Part of his strategy was to focus his resources on the most violent criminals. But that also meant that he used something that you know of called prosecutorial discretion. His strategies aligned with that of local leaders and was able to create historic drops in our murder rate.

You know through your experience, and you're intimately familiar, that enforcement decisions prosecutors must make every day, which charge to bring, which plea deal to offer, or what sentencing recommendation it makes, it's very important that local prosecu-

tors understand that given this enormous discretion our legal system gives them, that they are best determined to make decisions about public safety. I'm very concerned that many people are starting to call for a time in our country where the Department of Justice should prosecute State and local prosecutors who exercise that prosecutorial discretion. As Attorney General, will you commit to respecting the autonomy of State and local prosecutors?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, we have to work together with State and local prosecutors. That's what I did my entire career, and if confirmed as Attorney General, I will continue to do that. They serve a vital function in our justice system.

Senator BOOKER. And you understand, like in my State, that sometimes they will decide not to go after certain low-level offenses in order to use their scarce resources to focus on the strategy of pursuing more dangerous people.

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator. I completely understand that.

Senator BOOKER. Those decisions shouldn't be politicized if they're part of a larger public safety strategy.

Ms. BONDI. No, Senator. When I was a State prosecutor, we used to sit down with the U.S. attorneys and talk about cases and work together, and that's what I'm discussing about—bringing back the cooperation between State and local governments.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you, Ms. Bondi, and I just want to continue. One of the most stunning hypocrisies I've found since I've been down here in Washington is every politician gives lip service to driving down gun violence. But the very Federal authority—the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearm—that is primarily focused on enforcing America's gun laws and keeping people safe is hamstrung by Federal leaders. The ATF's core responsibility is assisting in local law enforcement. When I was mayor, I detailed local law enforcement to the ATF. But I'm stunned at how they have been stripped of resources, of their budget, and all of their capabilities to go after illegal gunrunning. When I was mayor of the city of Newark, we couldn't find one gun crime that was done with a legally purchased gun. But when I turned to the ATF, the ATF leader at that time told me in private we don't have the resources, support, or legal ability to go after these crimes.

I am concerned about our ability to fight gun crime in America that threatens our law enforcement officers, as well as people in communities, from red counties to blue cities. Will you commit to doing everything you can to making sure the ATF has its resources and the legal power to pursue illegal gunrunners in our country?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I will do everything in my power to prevent illegal gunrunners in our country. When I left being a State prosecutor to run for Attorney General, I almost didn't run because I was working on a wire case involving illegal gunrunners.

Senator BOOKER. The DOJ issued, in 2022, a use of force policy for its Federal law enforcement officers. It was approved by the heads of the DEA, FBI, U.S. Marshals, and ATF, and many of them said it is actually a use of force policy that actually protects law enforcement officers, as well as protects others from having their rights violated. It was also endorsed by the Fraternal Order of Police and NAPO, the National Association of Police Organiza-

tions. This policy is considered best practices in law enforcement. Will you commit to continuing this policy?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I have not read the policy. I will review the policy, and I will report back directly to you, if I am confirmed as Attorney General, and consult with law enforcement, absolutely.

Senator BOOKER. And I would appreciate if you looked at the policy, and I'll submit questions for the record hoping that you can elucidate maybe more of your thoughts on this.

Ms. BONDI. Certainly.

Senator BOOKER. And then I will also say, as my last question, because I see my time has run out, and I look forward to a second round. The DOJ issued a policy regarding chokeholds, which limited the use of no-knock warrants and chokeholds. It's worth noting that Florida has outlawed no-knock entries altogether since 1994. Would you commit to continuing the 2021 DOJ policy on these issues?

Ms. BONDI. I'm familiar with the policy. I have not read it. I am committed to reading it and studying it and reporting back to you on that policy, once again.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Hawley.

Senator HAWLEY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Bondi, welcome. Congratulations on your nomination. I'm so glad that you've been nominated, as we discussed when we had the chance to meet.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you.

Senator HAWLEY. It was a pleasure to work with you as a State Attorney General for a number of years, and I'm delighted to see you here today before the Committee. I look forward to your confirmation. You will be confirmed.

I, too, have taken note of the number of times you have been asked about weaponization of the Department of Justice as if it was a theoretical possibility that might happen in the future. One of my colleagues on the other side said, "weaponization may well occur under your tenure." We all know that weaponization has occurred like we've never seen before in American history under this administration, and I want to get even more specific. In the last 4 years, this administration has carried out an unprecedented attack and campaign against people of faith. If you look at the numbers, we've never seen anything like it before in American history. It has been one of the most disgraceful chapters in the history of the Justice Department and in the history of the FBI. And I hope that you will reverse this and do right by every American citizen, including, especially, people of faith. Let me give you some specifics.

After the *Dobbs* case was decided by the Supreme Court, over 100 pregnancy care centers and over 300 churches in this country were attacked, vandalized, fire bombed. Do you happen to know off the top of your head how many prosecutions Merrick Garland's Justice Department brought in those cases?

It's a—

Ms. BONDI. I do not, Senator.

Senator HAWLEY [continuing]. It's a stunning number. It's two. Hundreds of churches, hundreds of pregnancy care centers, and I



might just add, these pregnancy care centers, the attacks on them, which were violent, which were gruesome, were egged on and encouraged by rhetoric from Members of Congress, including Members of this body who have said that pregnancy care centers aren't real medicine, that they're not real doctors. They have legitimized these attacks. And the same thing was true of churches. And this Justice Department couldn't lift a finger to defend these Americans, but at the same time, they use legislation, a law known as the FACE Act, to prosecute at least 53 different pro-life demonstrators, including people like Mark Houck from Pennsylvania, to whom this Justice Department sent a SWAT team to his door in the early morning hours. He has, I think, seven children. In the early morning hours, an FBI SWAT team shows up at his door to take him into custody and prosecute him. By the way he was acquitted. This kind of outrageous, disparate treatment has to end.

So here's my question to you. Will you protect churches and pregnancy care centers when they are targeted for violence, when they are targeted for intimidation, when their members or parishioners are threatened with violence or other acts of illegal behavior?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator.

Senator HAWLEY. Will you stop the disparate treatment of Americans on the basis of religious faith?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator.

Senator HAWLEY. Will you stop the deliberate persecution of pro-life Americans for nothing more than their pro-life beliefs?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator.

Senator HAWLEY. Will you ensure that nothing like the Mark Houck case happens again, that Americans do not have SWAT teams arriving on their front doors with armed weapons to terrorize their children and their spouses, only in the end, of course, to have the case lost because there was nothing to it? Will you put an end to that kind of deliberate intimidation of good American citizens on the basis of their religious beliefs?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator.

Senator HAWLEY. I'm glad to hear you say that because we need it. We need it, Ms. Bondi. We need a new chapter at the Justice Department, and we need it quickly, and I'm glad you're committed to it.

Now, I also have heard you've been asked about your comment that you thought that in some cases we need to investigate the investigators, the ones who were bad. You know, I have to say I'm glad to hear you stand by that. We need to do that. You need to do that. And I'll give you another example. I'm sure you've read about this memo, which I now hold in my hands, this memo that was developed by the FBI field office in Richmond, Virginia, 23rd of January 2023, targeting Catholic parishes for spying, for recruitment of infiltrators. I mean, the memo goes on and on and on about the FBI's plans to put assets into Catholic parishes, into choirs. This is an unbelievable, unbelievable assault on Americans' First Amendment rights, and we only know of it because of a brave whistleblower who came forward and released it to us.

And I will tell you, I have never been misled and lied to like I was by the current Attorney General and the now-former FBI Director when they sat right where you're sitting now and told this

Committee, oh, we don't know anything about it. Oh, only one field office was involved. It was the single work of a single field office and a very few individuals. As it turns out, that's not true. Multiple field offices were involved. Multiple individuals were involved. Under your leadership, will you put a stop to the use of FBI or Department of Justice resources to try and recruit informants and spies into Christian churches or any church or house of worship in this country on the basis of nothing more than faith?

Ms. BONDI. Of course, Senator.

Senator HAWLEY. Let me just say this. To our knowledge, no one who was involved in the writing and performance—execution of this memo has been discipline or fired. Will you conduct an investigation like you talked about, Ms. Bondi, that will get to the bottom of abuses like this? And to be clear, this is an outrageous abuse. It is an outrageous abuse, one of the worst abuses of Department of Justice and FBI authority in our history. Will you conduct an investigation to find out who signed off on this, who approved it, who advocated for it within the Department of Justice? Will you open the books on these abuses so that the American people can have confidence in their DOJ?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, and I think what you're talking about is the ultimate weaponization, what we've been discussing all day. If I am confirmed as Attorney General, one of the first things I will—there'll be many—but I will personally read that memo, and if Mr. Patel is confirmed, discuss it with him right away.

Senator HAWLEY. Fantastic. And will you work with this Committee and our relevant Subcommittees? I'm going to chair a Subcommittee called the Crime and Terrorism Committee. We're going to do our own investigation into what happened here at the FBI and the DOJ. Will you work with us as you discover the nature of these abuses, and as you put a stop to them, will you work with us to make sure the American people get all the facts and this never happens again?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, yes. I look forward to working with you and the Democrats. I would think this is something that we can all agree on, on both sides, that this should not be happening in the United States of America and work together on it.

Senator HAWLEY. That's fantastic. Let me ask you one other question here in my just few seconds that are remaining. This memo—this memo targeting Catholic parishes repeatedly refers to, as an expert source, a group called the Southern Poverty Law Center. Now, the Southern Poverty Law Center has a long history as an anti-religious group that has repeatedly gone after conservative and religious organizations, called them hate groups, called them sometimes terrorist groups. They're cited in this memo. They once, infamously, the SPLC called the Family Research Council a terrorist hate group, and an armed gunman came into their lobby and opened fire. Will you put a stop to the use of the SPLC as an official source for any Department of Justice memorandum or finding?

Ms. BONDI. That will be one of the first things we will look at, as well, Senator, and report back to you and the Committee.

Senator HAWLEY. Thank you very much. Congratulations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Schiff.

Senator SCHIFF. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Bondi, as you know, the Supreme Court in *Trump v. United States* held the President has absolute immunity to commit crimes in certain core areas of the President's responsibility. One of those core areas is the Justice Department. So in a breathtakingly dangerous and irresponsible decision, Justice Roberts and the majority held the President could commit crimes using the Department of Justice and be immune from prosecution. Justice Sotomayor correctly said, "This new immunity lies about like a loaded weapon." So the fear and the concern we have is that the incoming President will use that loaded weapon, that immunity to commit crimes through the Department of Justice. And for that reason, it is all the more important that we have an Attorney General who has the independence, the strength, the intestinal fortitude to say no to the President when it is necessary.

So my first set of questions has to do whether you have the independence to say no when you must say no. And you can say this is hypothetical, but it is not hypothetical. So let me start with one very specific nonhypothetical. The President has said Jack Smith should go to jail. Will you investigate Jack Smith?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I haven't seen the file. I haven't seen the investigation. I haven't looked at anything. It would be irresponsible of me to make a commitment regarding anything without—you're a—you're a long-practicing attorney—without looking at a file.

Senator SCHIFF. So you would need a factual—

Ms. BONDI. Period.

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. You would need predicate to open an investigation of Jack Smith. Is that right?

Ms. BONDI. Not a summary by you sitting here, yes, sir.

Senator SCHIFF. And not a summary by the President either. Right?

Ms. BONDI. Absolutely.

Senator SCHIFF. So a summary by the President or his desire to investigate Jack Smith would not be enough for you to open an investigation of Jack Smith. Is that right?

Ms. BONDI. I will look at the facts and evidence in any case. You know—you know—

Senator SCHIFF. And—and—and sitting here is—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Seventy-two percent—

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Sitting here—

Ms. BONDI. Excuse me.

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Sitting here today—

Ms. BONDI. Senator, 72 percent—

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Sitting here—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Of Americans—

Senator SCHIFF. Please, I only have 7 minutes—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Have lost faith—

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Sitting here—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. In the Department of Justice.

Senator SCHIFF. Sitting here today—

Ms. BONDI. It's because of statements like this—

Senator SCHIFF. Sitting here today, are you aware of any factual predicate to investigate Jack Smith—sitting here today? Yes or no?

Ms. BOND. Senator, I will look at the facts and the circumstances of——

Senator SCHIFF. You can't answer that question?

Ms. BOND. [continuing]. Anything brought to me.

Senator SCHIFF. You're not a part of the Department yet. There's no worry about divulging——

Ms. BOND. Senator, I'm sitting here——

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Law enforcement——

Ms. BOND. [continuing]. As a nominee.

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Sensitive information. So just tell us——

Ms. BOND. I'm sitting here——

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Are you aware——

Ms. BOND. [continuing]. As a nominee.

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Just tell us, are you aware of a factual predicate to investigate Jack Smith? Yes or no?

Ms. BOND. Senator, what I'm hearing on the news——

Senator SCHIFF. Are you aware——

Ms. BOND. [continuing]. Is horrible.

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Of a——

Ms. BOND. Do I know——

Senator SCHIFF. You seem——

Ms. BOND. [continuing]. If he committed a crime?

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. You seem reluctant——

Ms. BOND. [continuing]. I have not looked at——

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. You seem reluctant to answer a simple question. Let me ask you a different simple question. The President also wants to jail Liz Cheney. Sitting here today, are you aware of any factual basis to investigate Liz Cheney? Yes or no?

Ms. BOND. Senator, that's a hypothetical, and I'm not going to——

Senator SCHIFF. No—no——

Ms. BOND. [continuing]. Answer that.

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. It's not hypothetical. I'm asking you sitting here today whether you are aware of a factual predicate to investigate Liz Cheney——

Ms. BOND. Senator, no one——

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Based on what you know.

Ms. BOND. [continuing]. Has asked me to investigate Liz Cheney. That is a——

Senator SCHIFF. The President——

Ms. BOND. [continuing]. Hypothetical.

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Has called for it publicly. You are aware of that. Aren't you?

Ms. BOND. No one has asked me to investigate——

Senator SCHIFF. But the——

Ms. BOND. [continuing]. Liz——

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. President has called——

Ms. BOND. You're all so worried about——

Senator SCHIFF. The President——

Ms. BOND. [continuing]. Liz Cheney, Senator.

Senator SCHIFF. The President has called——

Ms. BOND. You know what we——

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. For this——

Ms. BONDİ [continuing]. Should be worried about?

Senator SCHIFF. Ms. Bondi, please—

Ms. BONDİ. The crime rate—

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Answer my questions.

Ms. BONDİ [continuing]. In California right now—

Senator SCHIFF. You are aware—

Ms. BONDİ [continuing]. Is—

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. You are aware—

Ms. BONDİ [continuing]. Through the roof.

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Ms. Bondi, my—

Ms. BONDİ. Your robberies are—

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Ms. Bondi—

Ms. BONDİ [continuing]. Eighty-seven percent—

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. My question—

Ms. BONDİ [continuing]. Higher than the national average.

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. My question is this—

Ms. BONDİ. That's what I want—

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. My question is this—

Ms. BONDİ [continuing]. To be focused on, Senator—

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Do you have—

Ms. BONDİ [continuing]. If I'm confirmed—

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. The power to say no—

Ms. BONDİ [continuing]. As Attorney General.

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. To the President, and what you're suggesting today by your nonanswer is you don't have the independence to say no to the President. So let me ask you a different question—it also requires you, if you're going to be a good Attorney General, to be able to tell hard truths to the President. So my questions now are, can you tell hard truth to the President? So let me start with an easy truth that you could speak to the President. Can you tell us—can you tell him that Donald Trump lost the 2020 election? Can you say that? Do you have the independence to say that? Do you have the gravitas, the stature, the intestinal fortitude to say, Donald Trump, you lost the 2020 election? Can you tell us that here today?

Ms. BONDİ. Senator, what I can tell you is I will never play politics. You're trying to engage me in a gotcha. I won't do it. I—

Senator SCHIFF. No, I'm just asking you a simple question—

Ms. BONDİ [continuing]. I—I—I won't play politics—

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. If you can speak truth—

Ms. BONDİ [continuing]. With any ongoing—

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. To power.

Ms. BONDİ [continuing]. Investigation—

Senator SCHIFF. So let me ask you another—

Ms. BONDİ [continuing]. Like you did—

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Let me—

Ms. BONDİ [continuing]. Leaking your colleague—

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Let me ask you—

Ms. BONDİ [continuing]. Devin Nunes'—

Senator SCHIFF. If—

Ms. BONDİ [continuing]. Memo.

Senator SCHIFF. If—if you can't answer the question, let me ask you a different—what should be a simple truth, not a hard one.

Was there massive fraud affecting the result of the 2020 election? Yes or no?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I'm glad you asked that question. If you'll let me answer what I saw in Pennsylvania——

Senator SCHIFF. No, I asked a simple question about massive fraud——

Ms. BONDI. I—I can only tell you——

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Massive——

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. What I saw in——

Senator SCHIFF. No—no——

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Pennsylvania.

Senator SCHIFF. I know you want to answer a different question. But my question is, can you tell us whether there was massive fraud affecting the results of the 2020 election? Yes or no—was there——

Ms. BONDI. I can tell you——

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Or was there not?

Ms. BONDI. What I saw when I went——

Senator SCHIFF. That's not——

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. As an advocate——

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. That's not my question.

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. To the campaign.

Senator SCHIFF. So—so you can't answer that question. You can't speak that even easy truth to us, let alone to the President. So let me ask you a different question. It will also be important that you give good advice to the President. Are you prepared to advise the President not to pardon people who beat police officers?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, as I said, the pardons are at the direction of the President. We will look and we will advise. I will look at every case on a case——

Senator SCHIFF. Okay. So you look at——

Ms. BONDI. Let me finish—on a case-by-case——

Senator SCHIFF. Okay.

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Basis.

Senator SCHIFF. Okay, good. Let me——

Ms. BONDI. And I——

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Let me——

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Abhor——

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Let me——

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Violence to police officers.

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Follow up with that. So will it be your advice to the President, Mr. President, I know you said you want to issue hundreds of pardons on day one. Will it be your advice to the President, no, Mr. President, I need to go over them on a case-by-case basis. Do not issue blanket pardons. Will that be your advice to the President?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I have not looked at any of those files. If confirmed, I will look at the files——

Senator SCHIFF. And will you——

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. For the pardons——

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Be able to do——

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. As well as the——

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Will you be——

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Ongoing investigation.

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Able to review hundreds of cases on day one?

Ms. BONDI. I will look at every file I am——

Senator SCHIFF. Of course——

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Asked to look at.

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. You won't. So will you advise the——

Ms. BONDI. Can I please——

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. President——

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Can I answer——

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Will you——

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. The question?

Senator SCHIFF. Well, my question is——

Ms. BONDI. I would have plenty of staff. You said, of course you won't?

Senator SCHIFF. You—you'll be able to review——

Ms. BONDI. Listen, I'm not——

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Hundreds of cases——

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Going to mislead——

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. On the first day?

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. This body, nor you.

Senator SCHIFF. All right. Let me ask you another question. You don't want to answer that. Let me ask——

Ms. BONDI. You were censured——

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. You another question.

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. By Congress——

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. You will also——

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Senator, for comments——

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. It will also——

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Just like this——

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. It will also——

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. That are so reckless.

Senator SCHIFF. It will also—it will also be important for you to be able to preserve the records, the evidence of the Department. Are you ready to commit that none of the evidence in the January 6 investigation will be destroyed under your watch?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I will follow the law. I will consult with ethical officials in the Department.

Senator SCHIFF. Do you see any ethical basis to destroy evidence in the January 6 investigation? Then why can't you answer the question? Why can't you say I commit to this Committee we will never destroy the evidence in the January 6 investigation. Why can't you give this Committee and the American people that assurance?

Ms. BONDI. Are you frightened because evidence was destroyed against President Trump that was false? Is that why——

Senator SCHIFF. Why do you——

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. You're frightened now?

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Why do you have difficulty——

Ms. BONDI. I can't believe this is even an issue.

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Why do you have difficulty answering that question?

Ms. BONDI. I can't believe——

Senator SCHIFF. Why do you have——

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. You're asking——

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Difficulty——

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Such a question.

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. Why do you have difficulty promising to preserve evidence at the Department of Justice? Why is that a difficult question?

Ms. BONDI. I will follow the law.

Senator SCHIFF. It shouldn't be a difficult question.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Blackburn.

Senator BLACKBURN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Bondi, I know that you are pleased that we are moving to the end of round one——

Ms. BONDI. Round one.

Senator BLACKBURN [continuing]. And we appreciate your being here. And I appreciate that you told my California colleagues you were willing to work with them even in light of the manner in which they have approached you.

Now, one thing I think we need to have everybody understand that is watching this hearing today and everyone sitting in here, what we have witnessed over the last 4 years with a weaponized DOJ—my colleagues have talked about this, and the American people know this. They know what was carried out against President Trump in his administration, and in November, they voted to see an end to two tiers of justice, two tiers of treatment, two tiers of access because they have absolutely had it with the lies, with the accusations, and with the attacks that have come against so many people who were just seeking to live their lives, and then all of a sudden found the FBI, or another Federal agency, or the DOJ knocking at their door. You know, Ms. Bondi, it would make you believe that my colleagues have learned nothing—nothing—from the elections in November. They don't see this as a movie script that someone may have liked to write. What they see is this is real life, and they want a restoration to equal justice, equal access, equal treatment, abiding by the rule of law.

Many of us have talked today about making America safe again, and in Tennessee, I hear a good bit about this. And as we've discussed your nomination, one of the things I've mentioned to people is your career as a prosecutor, and you have touched on that some today, and you are bringing that insight of being a prosecutor to bear. And I do appreciate that. Now, one thing that I think is noteworthy, and I, in preparation for the hearing, I looked some of these numbers up. During President Trump's first term, violent crime in this country actually fell.

Ms. BONDI. Yes.

Senator BLACKBURN. It fell by 17 percent, and in the first 2 years of the Biden administration, it soared by 43 percent. This is crime that is taking place in all of our communities. We've seen a rise. Whether it's California or Tennessee, we have seen a rise. So I want you to talk to Tennesseans, to Californians, to all Americans about what you're going to do to get this crime rate down in this country.

Ms. BONDI. Senator, thank you for that question, and despite the questions from Senator Schiff, I look forward to working with you and the State of California to do everything we can to fight violent



crime in California. And you know, as well as I, that crime is only going to go through the roof now after these forest fires. You're going to have looting. You're going to have price gouging. You're going to have so many things that I have dealt with in the State of Florida, and I am committed to working with California just as much as I'm committed to working with you, Senator Kennedy, and the tragedy that just took place in Louisiana—given all the human beings that were murdered in your State. And we have the Super Bowl coming up in less than 3 weeks now, I believe. Senator, I've been a little busy, but we've got to ensure, if I'm confirmed, that everyone in this country is safe. And I will work with you, I will work with you, Senator, I will work with all of you in this country for everything that Senator Blackburn said.

We have got to reduce violent crime, and we have got to restore integrity to our law enforcement officers. Donald Trump—we keep saying he won this election by 77.3 million votes and 312 electoral votes. Look at the map of California, Senator Schiff. It's bright red, the popular vote, for a reason. People want law and order. They want to be safe so they can go to—so they can take their children to school, so they can go to church, Senator Hawley. People want safe streets. Of course we care about our economy and what's happening in this world, but if we're not safe, none of that works.

We have got to come together. We have got to work together to make America safe again, and that, in turn, will make America great again. And I don't know where that phrase has become a bad word because I think that's a great one—making America great again.

Senator BLACKBURN. Let me move on with you to something else that's about law and order, and that is Section 1507 because making certain that our Justices are protected is important. And we also, with our judges, Section 1507 makes illegal any protest outside of a judge's residence if the intent is to influence the judge's decision-making. And we have heard about the protests outside of Justices' homes where they were shouting loud and clear things like—and I'm quoting some of that—"If you take away our choices, we will riot," end quote. Another one, "No privacy for us, no peace for you," end quote. In other words, if the Justices did not vote to uphold *Roe* and *Casey*, the protestors would continue to harass them. Despite this clear violation of the law, Merrick Garland did not bring a single charge—not one single charge under Section 1507. Will you commit to faithfully enforcing Section 1507 as Attorney General?

Ms. BONDI. I will faithfully enforce that law and all laws that I am asked to review. And, Senator, I watched that on TV, and it horrified me, the protestors outside their houses. You can't do that for a reason, because our Justices have to remain safe and unbiased and protected from threats—as do we all, but they do enjoy a special protection, and, yes, that should be enforced.

Senator BLACKBURN. Thank you, Ms. Bondi. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman GRASSLEY. We'll now have our second round that I announced earlier. We'll each have 4 minutes.

When we were talking in my office, I brought up the importance of your listening to whistleblowers and about 30 or 35 investiga-

tions I've got underway of the executive branch, and not just because of a Democrat President—some of them are probably carryovers from Republican Presidents. It's very important that the executive branch understand the cooperation that you must have with us to carry out our responsibilities to see that the President faithfully executes the laws. And I think that too often, whistleblowers, being patriotic people they are, want Government to do what Government's just supposed to do, and find something wrong. They want to report it, and they want to report it within the agency. They don't come to Congress unless they don't get any help in the executive branch.

It seems to me that it's very important that you respect whistleblowers. But I've seen them treated like a skunk at a picnic by the agency they're in. I've seen them ruin themselves professionally. One time, an FBI agent came to me, was escorted out of headquarters with his gun and badge taken away from him just because the laboratory there was not using science to make sure that crime was actually committed. So now we have a new \$40 million science lab so that people are protected and get their constitutional rights.

So will you protect whistleblowers from retaliation and promote a culture—and I think that last thing, promote a culture, is more important—that values the important contribution of whistleblowers?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, and, Senator, I think, so people fully understand the importance of whistleblowers, they have to be able to tell the truth and come forward without fear of retaliation——

Chairman GRASSLEY. Yes.

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. And that's the purpose of the whistleblower statute.

Chairman GRASSLEY. And when there's retaliation, the taxpayers' money's paying for that retaliation in most cases. The Biden Justice Department issued guidance telling prosecutors to stop charging mandatory minimums and ignore laws setting penalties on drug type. It also allowed folks to pay civil and criminal fines to politicize nongovernment organizations instead of the Government Treasury. I put together a list of their guidance. I find it very concerning and unfair to the taxpaying public, and I'd like to have you review those policies very soon after you're confirmed.

Ms. BONDI. Absolutely, Senator.

Chairman GRASSLEY. In regard to antitrust, enforcing antitrust laws is extremely important to ensure that markets are fair and that consumers are protected. I've been active in making sure that the Justice Department and the FTC carefully scrutinize mergers and that they look out for anticompetitive behavior and predatory practices. I keep a close eye on these issues as they impact my State of Iowa, and particularly agriculture, healthcare, and technology industries. And I'm interested in your commitment to make antitrust enforcement a priority.

Ms. BONDI. Antitrust enforcement was a priority when I was a State AG, and it will be a priority, if I am confirmed as Attorney General, and, again, I am so proud to have Gail Slater handling that. She is——

Chairman GRASSLEY. Do you agree that——

Ms. BONDI. She is loved by both sides of the aisle.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Okay. Well, my time's up. Go ahead, Senator.

Senator DURBIN. Go ahead.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Okay. The Civil Rights Division in your Department, if you're head of it, is supposed to enforce laws against race and sex discrimination. But under the Biden administration, the Justice Department has arguably promoted discrimination and turned a blind eye to racist hiring practices. Do you agree that race and sex discrimination by employers is illegal, even if the discrimination is called diversity or equity?

Ms. BONDI. No one should be discriminated against.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Go ahead. I'm done.

Senator DURBIN. You owe me 44 seconds.

[Laughter.]

Senator DURBIN. Ms. Bondi, I'd like to say something, and I hope you agree with it. Violence is never acceptable when it comes to political expression. Period.

Ms. BONDI. I think I said that initially. Yes, I do agree.

Senator DURBIN. I——

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Of course I agree.

Senator DURBIN [continuing]. I abhor that sort of thing happening when it comes to conservative Supreme Court Justices, and I abhor it when it comes to Nancy Pelosi's husband being attacked in his home——

Ms. BONDI. That was horrible.

Senator DURBIN [continuing]. Which we should all say unequivocally, both are unacceptable. I think you would agree. Correct?

Ms. BONDI. Horrible.

Senator DURBIN. All right. I guess, as I reflect on what you've said today, a couple things surprised me. I did not expect you to be as outspoken as you are about Kash Patel. He's been characterized as a professional career defense attorney and a career prosecutor. That's a pretty amazing achievement in his life. But he also has said and done some things which are impossible to understand and justify. For example, are you familiar with something called the QAnon conspiracy?

Ms. BONDI. I have—I have heard of it. But I act—I do not know what it is. But I have heard of it many times, Senator.

Senator DURBIN. So let me tell you what I've learned about it. The core belief is that a cabal of satanic, cannibalistic child molesters are embedded within our Government and are conspiring against President-elect Trump. They asked Mr. Patel about it and he said, quote, "I agree with a lot that the movement says," end of quote. Does that sound like a good preparation to run the FBI?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I don't know anything about—I, actually, I had heard of QAnon, but I've never heard that definition attached to it—at all. You're going to have to ask Mr. Patel about those statements.

Senator DURBIN. We will, and I'll tell you, until we get answers to those questions, I don't know many people on this side of the table who would give him an unequivocal endorsement. This, and his enemies list—what he calls his "government gangsters"—this is what you expect of Stasi. This is what you expect of secret police. It is not what you expect of justice in America as you've even de-

scribed it at the table today. So I would say this unequivocal support of Mr. Patel should at least have some reservation until he explains some of these outrageous positions he has taken.

Ms. BONDI. I look forward to hearing his testimony about QAnon in front of this Committee.

Senator DURBIN. You will.

[Laughter.]

Senator DURBIN. Let me say another word about January 6 and what happened. We lived through it, many of us. We'll never forget it. To think that the United States of America's Capitol Building was desecrated by an insurrectionist mob that came in and did horrible things, particularly to our police force that keeps you safe as you sit there and keeps us safe every single day. Over a hundred of them were attacked by these demonstrators. One, Kenneth Bonawitz, a member of the so-called Proud Boys, another alt-right group, assaulted at least six officers, placed one in a chokehold, and lifted him up in the neck. Bonawitz injured one officer so severely, he had to retire. Kyle Fitzsimons, convicted for five separate assaults against law enforcement, including one that caused a career-ending and life-altering injury to the U.S. Capitol Police Sergeant Aquilino Gonell. Can you understand why when Donald Trump says, the day I am inaugurated as President, I will issue a blanket pardon to these, quote, "political prisoners," we view this with an outrage on our side? These men and women risk their lives for us every day, and they almost died. Some of them did die in the course of this attack. Why aren't we treating them as such, and why do you have to reserve judgment? Vice President Vance didn't. When he was asked this week, he said the pardons should not be extended to those who were guilty of violence against policemen.

Ms. BONDI. Yes—and, Senator, I do not agree with violence against anyone, but especially police officers. And every time I've been walking through these halls meeting with all of you, I—the men and women of the Capitol Police Department are incredible. They do a great job. They deserve to be safe, and I do not agree with violence against any police officer.

Senator DURBIN. I would hope—

Ms. BONDI. I never have, Senator.

Senator DURBIN. You weren't able to answer my question affirmatively earlier, but I would hope that if this moves forward in a positive way on your nomination, you will speak up at some point on behalf of these police officers who are keeping you safe today and your family safe. I yield.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Before Senator Graham, I want to enter into the record, without objection from the Members of this Committee, letters from law enforcement groups who support Ms. Bondi's nomination. These groups include the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Sheriff's Association, the National Association of Police Organizations. They praise her, quote, "support for law enforcement, crime prevention, and public safety," end of quote.

Without objection, so ordered.

[The information appears as submissions for the record.]

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you. Well, I've been gone for a while, so they're asking you about Kash Patel. It must be going pretty well.

[Laughter.]

Ms. BONDI. You didn't miss anything, Senator.

Senator GRAHAM. That's just an observation. So, anyway, thanks to my colleagues on the Democratic side. It's been a good hearing—and, a couple things. Pardons. If somebody applies for a pardon, you'll give the President legal advice as to whether or not he should grant it. Is that the way the system works?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. So rather than prejudging what you would do, you would look at the application and give him your best advice, and you don't like people who beat up cops.

Ms. BONDI. Correct. I hope no one does.

Senator GRAHAM. Yes. Okay, fair enough. So let's just get back to the process.

Ms. BONDI. I'm not going to speak for the President—

Senator GRAHAM. Yes.

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. But the President does not like people that abuse police officers, either.

Senator GRAHAM. Yes, well, the hope is that through this pardon process, you'll make a rational decision based on the applicant rather than deciding the outcome in a Senate hearing. That's all I'm asking. That's what I would want. If I, you know, I represented somebody, I'd want, at least, to be heard. Now, Section 230, are you familiar with it?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator.

Senator GRAHAM. One thing that unites this Committee is protecting children and society at large from social media abuse.

Ms. BONDI. Mm-hmm.

Senator GRAHAM. We passed online privacy legislation. Senator Durbin's been great to work with. Everybody—Klobuchar—we're all trying to find out how to empower people who may be victims of social media. What do you—to empower a parent whose child's been bullied, when you call the social media platform and they blow you off, you go to court and they kick you out of court because of Section 230. Sexual exploitation of children on the internet, we've heard stories that make us—just break our hearts. We're united in trying to give people a say. If they take your content down, you're appealing to the people who made the decision to take your content down. So what I want to do, along with Senator Hawley, everybody, is repeal Section 230 or replace it with a system that empowers consumers who may have been hurt. Do you agree with that?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I would love to look at that with you. I'm not familiar with what you want to do on the issue. I've talked to Senator Klobuchar. I think Senator Durbin and I may have even discussed it. But I'm committed to looking at that with you. There are so many issues online that—that's one of the things—we have to find things that can bring us together now, and this has to be one of them—

Senator GRAHAM. Well, just—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Protecting our children.

Senator GRAHAM. Here's what FBI Director said, Wray, whether you agree with him or not, I agree with this: "I see blinking lights

everywhere I turn regarding the national security threats.” Does that make sense to you?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator. I was looking at that, the date of that. That was a year ago. Yes, Senator. I also heard about—I haven’t seen it yet—his “60 Minutes” interview that was very troubling to me—

Senator GRAHAM. Yes, so—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. For our country.

Senator GRAHAM. Right.

[Poster is displayed.]

Senator GRAHAM. We know we found eight guys from Tajikistan that were released—caught again because they were tied to ISIS. So the point I’m trying to make is January 20th—we own this. I just urge you, to the extent you can, to urge the President to secure that border. We need money. The idea of moving money around from Defense is not going to cut it. We need a lot of money for bed space to finish the wall, do technology, hire ICE agents to accelerate deportation of people who are criminals and gang members. We don’t have time to waste. I hope you’ll make that an urgency because the threat is real. Are you worried about an attack on our Homeland being generated from ISIS or their affiliates, and what should we do about it?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I don’t have a security clearance yet, but only from the public reporting that I’ve seen, I’m terrified.

Senator GRAHAM. [Responds with a thumbs-up gesture.]

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Whitehouse.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. Thank you, Chairman. I’m going to try to fit in two questions in my 4 minutes. Lindsey, stick around because I’m going to say something nice about you.

[Laughter.]

Senator WHITEHOUSE. First, yes to 230. We’ve got to really work on that. There’s a lot of support for fixing 230—in fact, outright repealing 230 in this Committee. First question. Presumably your commitment to fairly enforcing the law based on facts and evidence would also apply to environmental cases.

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. I’m concerned because, you know, under Trump, criminal prosecutions for pollution dropped sharply in his first term, and you will be running an Environment Natural Resources Division that has things like, for instance, a Methane Task Force that big polluters who spent big money to get President Trump reelected don’t like. And they’re going to be coming to you to say, hey, we don’t want a whole lot of enforcement on this. Methane leaks, carbon dioxide leaks, it’s a pollutant polluting our water, polluting our air—will you be strong when that happens?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I—if you haven’t learned yet, I’m pretty strong, and I’m pretty independent. And I will—I think you and I spoke about this in your office—

Senator WHITEHOUSE. We did.

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. A bit—

Senator WHITEHOUSE. We did.

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. I don’t know a lot about that issue, but I am committed to meeting with the E&RD Division and talking to you about it. I wish I knew more about the issue you faced, but

I don't. But I'm committed to absolutely looking at it and doing what I can to help you——

Senator WHITEHOUSE. Great.

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. In your State.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. I don't want environmental prosecutions to be an ignored stepchild subset. It's law just like any other law. The second question that I'd like to get to goes back to Chairman Grassley's opening comments that it's going to be really important for the Department of Justice under your leadership to answer questions from Senators, both Republican and Democrat, and to give us real answers. Sometimes the best oversight comes from the other party, and, indeed, sometimes the best oversight comes from one Senator who sticks to one issue and persists at it without necessarily support from the rest of the Committee. And that oversight has been really consequential in the past and it's really important. So Chairman Grassley has been very good about trying to enforce that rule, and I want to tell you just a quick story about something that went the wrong way, I believe.

Crossfire Hurricane was mentioned by Senator Graham. There was a Committee investigation into Crossfire Hurricane. During that Crossfire Hurricane investigation, boxloads of material was provided by the Department and the Bureau to Senate Republicans. They got files. They got investigative reports. They got internal memos. They got stuff that would not be FOIA-able. They really were able to do a deep dive because they got everything they asked for, even stuff that the FBI would ordinarily not produce. That was happening on that side of the aisle. For me, I had questions about Justice Kavanaugh's supplemental background investigation. And I asked for things like, what is the Department of Justice policy for how tip lines work? That's a FOIA-able question. I didn't get a single piece of paper. I asked for things like, what are the ground rules for investigations of supplemental background investigations? I didn't get a single piece of paper. Senator Graham called the Deputy Attorney General up into his office to say, will you guys please knock it off and give this guy some information?

So, you know, I have lived the example of if you're a Republican on this Committee in a Republican administration, you get everything you ask for and more, and if you're a Democrat, you get zero. That was not a great moment for me and not a great moment for the Department. And so I will take the Chairman at his word that he wants the Department to be responsive to requests from all of us, and I would ask you, will you be responsive to all of us, irrespective of our party affiliation, if we are asking legitimate questions that you have the power to answer?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I think I've said that from the beginning. Yes, especially on Freedom of Information Act. I will follow the laws that apply to the Freedom of Information Act. I believe in that. I actually dealt with the public records when I was a State prosecutor. It's been so long ago, I'd forgotten about that.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. Yes.

Ms. BONDI. So I handled all the public records.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. Yes. One just sort of point of order here, the Freedom of Information Act process is one thing. Anybody can get information——

Ms. BONDI. Right.

Senator WHITEHOUSE [continuing]. Under the Freedom of Information act process. As Senators, we should be able to do better than that. When we're doing worse than that, that's a sign that somebody's hiding something. When we're doing better than that, that's a good thing for congressional oversight. Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Thank you. Senator Tillis.

Ms. BONDI. Can we take a minute off Senator Schiff since—I'm joking—since he took an extra minute?

Chairman GRASSLEY. Yes, you can.

[Laughter.]

Ms. BONDI. I'm joking.

Chairman GRASSLEY. You wanted to say something to Senator Schiff?

Ms. BONDI. No, sir. I ask if we could take a minute off Senator Schiff's since Senator Whitehouse—

Senator WHITEHOUSE. I went over by a minute.

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Took an extra minute. I was teasing.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Tillis.

Senator TILLIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Bondi, I wanted to come back, and I'm glad I did because I got another mark on my Bingo card. QAnon came up.

[Laughter.]

Senator TILLIS. It's a little-known fact, but the so-called—I think I heard someone say that that's an organization—a cabal that has cannibalistic tendencies. I don't know if you all know this. It's a well-documented fact that the so-called QAnon shaman is a vegetarian who actually had to be transferred to another prison to satisfy his dietary needs after being sentenced to 41 months in prison. So I don't know if all the QAnon people are cannibals, that's a little bit absurd. I just wanted to add a little levity here and let you all know I'm one mark away from hitting Bingo.

[Laughter.]

Senator TILLIS. But, you know, it's important to talk about this, folks, because this is the part I don't like about the big Committee. I love Intellectual Property Subcommittee because we don't get into this theater. But it's just absurd to think that—and it was mentioned in reference to a comment that Kash Patel made, who I spoke with earlier today. You know, it's just absurd to kind of throw that stuff out there. Does anybody honestly believe someone with a distinguished career like Kash Patel thinks that a cannibalistic cabal controlling the internals of Government really exists? Let me give you an example why I resist that notion.

I resist the notion that most of the Members here, who all raised tens of millions of dollars through ActBlue, that has a subpage that—only until Senator Butler finally told them to take it down after I spent a year ranting about it. On their ActBlue—a subpage on ActBlue had the “All Cops are Bastards” subpage and fundraising drive. I came to this Committee for a year and tried to encourage my Members to say this is absurd. So would it be fair for me to say that President Biden is embracing an organization that thinks all cops are bastards, and you should have a fundraising



run for 13.12 miles, and protest outside of police departments, and put pressure on them?

Saying that President Trump or you or anybody else are somehow—or Kash Patel have an allegiance, it's so absurd. To think in a big hearing like this, we actually just talked about—that we—that we actually think someone of the stature and the experience that would come before this Committee would actually think a bunch of people-eating cabals controlling the innards of Government was real. That's just being—I get the theatrics. I get the marketing department, thought it'd be really cool if it was said, but, guys, that's not us at our best. And I just thought it was kind of funny that he's a vegetarian, too.

But I want to go back to—this is a narrative that people are going to force, and I'm going to trust you to do what you do as a prosecutor. Like you said earlier, you're going to examine the facts of a case. You're going to give the President your best advice. If you—I cannot believe if there is compelling evidence that you as a prosecutor know that this person breached the Capitol and injured a police officer, that the President would even ask you to consider it, and I certainly can't imagine you recommending that they move forward. It's a hypothetical. I don't want you to respond to it, but your track record as a prosecutor would suggest otherwise.

Last question. You mentioned that when you were dealing with some of the opioid challenge—I think it was opiates, OxyContin, I believe you mentioned—that you went up against your own party or you got some pushback from your own party. Would you explain how you have looked at your party and done the courageous thing of speaking truth to them?

Ms. BONDI. Oh, I remember when that started. Several of my former colleagues are behind me. They're probably smiling. But I remember when that started, I said, oh, I'll never get elected to a second term because, yes, I fought for what I believed in based on meeting these victims' families and seeing the need, and I fought—I fought the industry.

Whew, that was——

Senator TILLIS. And you were in an elected position.

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. That was a big industry and the doctors——

Senator TILLIS [continuing]. You were in an elected position with a lot of people, with a target on you, and you stood firm. Thank you.

Ms. BONDI. More than once, Senator. Thank you.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman Grassley. Attorney General Bondi, in our previous conversation, we talked about criminal justice reform and, in particular, your contribution to the enactment of the First Step Act in the previous Trump administration. And I just want to talk with you about a couple of bipartisan initiatives in this area.

Senators Cornyn, Lee, Durbin, Tillis, Booker, and I have introduced a bipartisan bill called the Safer Supervision Act. It focuses on the fact that Federal probation officers have a massive caseload, often more than a hundred folks they are supposed to be closely supervising. And this bill would work on focusing supervised release

resources on those who really need it and creating positive incentives for those who are willing and able to be rehabilitated and leave prison much less likely to reoffend. What's your experience about the need to support people when they get out of prison and to provide them with positive incentives rather than just leaving them to their own free will and the very high likelihood they may reoffend and thus violate public safety concerns?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, and, Senator Coons, that's why—reentry we call it, halfway houses, it's what you need, Senator Welch—are so important. Because people—people, many people deserve to go to prison. But many people are going to get out of prison—

Senator COONS. Almost all.

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. And we don't want a revolving door. We want to do everything we can to make productive members of society. And when someone goes to prison, I mean, I saw this every day. You saw this as a revolving door. People get out. And—first of all, I'll back up. We need drug programs. I could go on. We need drug programs—more drug programs in our prisons. We have to. Mental health, we would be here for another 2 days. We have to get more mental health in our prison system, counseling to help people. I think our local jails actually do a better job of it, at least in Florida. But we've got to work on that because when people get out, we expect them to do well. Many people don't even know how to go get a driver's license, yet we're telling you, go get a job, have a place to live.

Senator COONS. So, if I could—

Ms. BONDI. So we have to do everything we can to help.

Senator COONS [continuing]. If I could move to the driver's license question.

Ms. BONDI. Sure.

Senator COONS. I've also led a bipartisan bill with Senator Wicker, Senator Grassley is also a Co-Sponsor. It's called the Driving for Opportunity Act, and it recognizes that in many States, there is a practice of suspending driver's licenses where someone is too poor to pay their court-related or public-safety-related fines and fees but where the driver's license isn't suspended because they're dangerously driving. It's just because they haven't paid their fines and fees. And then without a driver's license, they lose their job or they're not able to get a job. Would you be willing to work with this bipartisan group of us on these two bills, Driving for Opportunity and the Safer Supervision Act?

Ms. BONDI. I would love to read both of them, and I was unaware of that happening with driver's license.

Senator COONS. Last two questions. Clemency. As we discussed, often near the end of an administration, there's a rush to consider pardons. Would you be willing to work at a more institutionalized clemency process where there aren't just lots of commutations near the end of a term, but where there's a regular process where the DOJ and the clemency process is looked at to see whether there are reforms that should be made and recommendations that could be made to the President throughout his term?

Ms. BONDI. I would love to look at that process. I can tell you that the pardons, the commutations that Joe Biden just made were abhorrent to me—absolutely abhorrent, taking people off death

row. I looked at the facts of many of those cases, and they were so troubling to me. I would—I don't know what process you intend to implement, but I would love to study that with you.

Senator COONS. Well, we talked positively about your experience and mine with drug courts, veterans courts, mental health courts. There are some things we will continue to disagree about and other things I hope we can work on together. Thank you.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you, Senator.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Lee.

Senator LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Bondi, as you're aware, criminal justice reform has been an important part of my role on this Committee. I worked for the better part of a decade with Senator Durbin, Chairman Grassley, Senator Whitehouse, Senator Cornyn, Senator Booker, and a bunch of others to eventually pass the First Step Act, which President Trump signed into law in December 2018. The First Step Act, as the name implies, was intended to be the first of multiple steps. Much remains to be done, including with the implementation of the First Step Act. The credits available under the First Step Act are still being implemented and need more. I assume you'd be willing, if confirmed, to help us continue to implement the First Step Act.

Ms. BONDI. Yes. Yes, Senator. And also, I just learned, it's my understanding—I don't know for a fact—but it's my understanding that a lot of those beds for halfway houses, for reentry have not been filled under the First Step Act. So if that's true, I want to look at that right away and figure out why.

Senator LEE. Right, and I think other reforms, like the Safer Supervision Act, of which I'm a Co-Sponsor, can also be helpful on that front. It's always important to make sure that we're running—although ours is not the largest criminal law enforcement institution in the country, meaning the States themselves have far more criminal cases, far more prisoners under their jurisdiction, collectively, than the United States Government does, and nonetheless, it is a significant presence. And States often look to the Federal Government, sometimes for good, other times for ill, on leadership as to where they should take their own criminal justice system. And so it's important that we get this right, and especially given that we've been wrong at times in the past.

I also think it's important to address the topic of overcriminalization. A few years ago, a few of us on this Committee decided that we wanted to find out how many Federal crimes are on the books. We reached out to the Congressional Research Service, the CRS, whose job it is to answer such questions like this when Members have these questions. The answer that came back was stunning. The answer that came back was to the effect that the answer is unknown and unknowable—but at least 300,000. A lot of the reason for this is that there are a lot of instances in which Federal regulations impose criminal penalties, impose criminal penalties, often without Congress independently enacting anything, just using some sort of delegated lawmaking authority from Congress, which ought not be okay. Incorporating elements of a criminal offense into a criminal regulation, which, you know, we add to the Code of Federal Regulations, at a clip of around 100,000 pages a year, give or take, depending on which parts of the Federal Register that you

add to the CFR at the end of each year, seems highly problematic to me for multiple reasons.

Reason number one, of course, are that Article I, § 1 and 7, make clear that you cannot make a Federal law or change a Federal law without Congress, without both Houses of Congress passing the same text, submitting it to the President. Reason number two, oftentimes when this happens, you end up with an either absent or hugely ambiguous mens rea—meaning the standard of intent with which one must have acted in order to commit the criminal offense in question is often absent or at least so murky that nobody can tell what it means. Both of these things, of course, lead to huge problems for defendants and for the liberty interests of the American people. So I'd ask that you, if confirmed, help work with us on these things and share any thoughts you might have on them.

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator, and I wasn't aware of the mens rea issue. Yes.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Klobuchar.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Very good. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for mentioning antitrust. I am really proud of the work you and I have done together, as well as Senator Lee and I. And I know we discussed with you, Ms. Bondi, the work on allowing State AGs a bill that Senator Lee led, and I was the Democratic lead, on letting State AGs keep the antitrust cases involving tech in their States. And Senator Grassley and I successfully passed our bill to finally update the merger fees, which have allowed larger mergers have to pay in more, smaller mergers less, and that has led, along with other reasons, to beef up the Antitrust Division of Antitrust during the last few years. And I want to make sure that you are committed to continuing a strong Antitrust Division with adequate personnel.

Ms. BONDI. And, if I am confirmed, I intend on bringing in Gail Slater. She is amazing and I think bipartisan support for her, and did a lot of antitrust. Well, I had someone who knew antitrust much better than I when I was State Attorney General, and it's very important—very important.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. How about the resources for the Division? It has been, under this administration—the current outgoing one, they have added lawyers and others to it, and I—what my question was, is if you'll continue that.

Ms. BONDI. Yes, I was actually looking at the structure of that unit, and if I am confirmed—I've been a little busy—I plan on working with Gail Slater—

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Okay.

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. And all the lawyers in that unit.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Okay. And then, just—you and I discussed some of the important cases—the *Google* case, *Live Nation-Ticketmaster*, the *Apple* case—I don't know if we talked about that one—but *RealPage*, and will you commit to continue these cases and to pursue remedies that will fully protect consumers from anti-competitive conduct? I'm not asking what the result will be. I can imagine you couldn't answer that. But I'm just asking that, under—if you are confirmed, that you will continue the work on these cases.

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator. I haven't looked at those on a case-by-case basis, but I am committed to that type of case and protecting consumers—

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Okay.

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. And I will look at that, and have that unit look at that right away.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Thank you. At its founding in 1870, the Justice Department's priority was to enforce civil rights. That's what was founded, the reason guaranteed by the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments during Reconstruction. Today, civil rights enforcement is led by the Civil Rights Division. Do you believe it is a critical mission of the Justice Department to vigorously enforce our Nation's civil rights laws?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Okay. Thank you. Voting rights. Will you commit to properly enforcing Federal laws that protect the right to vote that are critical to ensuring free and fair elections, like the Voting Rights Act?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Okay. The—we're back to the FBI nominee—again, I express my deep concern, Kash Patel. He has vowed to retaliate against the President-elect's enemies, quote, "not just in the government, but in the media," end quote. As we know, the President-elect has already sued a pollster in Iowa, whose predictions turned out to be wrong, which happens with pollsters all over the place, as we all know, but a free press is essential to our democracy. Reporters must be able to do their job without fear of being investigated or prosecuted. Will you commit that the Justice Department, under your leadership, if confirmed, will respect the importance of a free press?

Ms. BONDI. Absolutely.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. And if the President or the—depends on who the FBI Director is, I have some strong views on that—tries to push to go after the media, how would you respond to that?

Ms. BONDI. I have not—clearly, he's made some statements, but I haven't talked to Mr. Patel about those statements. But going after the media just because they're the media is wrong, of course.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. All right. Thank you.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Kennedy.

Senator KENNEDY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General, I admire your spunk.

Ms. BONDI. Coming from you, Senator, that is a huge compliment.

[Laughter.]

Senator KENNEDY. Well, you know, I learned the hard way up here—you may know it already—but up here, if you turn the other cheek, you just get it in the neck. You're friends with President Trump, are you?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator, and I spoke to him this morning.

Senator KENNEDY. You're not enemies?

Ms. BONDI. No, Senator. I don't think I'd be sitting here if I was an enemy. He'd be crazy to have me sitting here if I was an enemy.

Senator KENNEDY. So you're friends.

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator.

Senator KENNEDY. I find otherworldly this suggestion by some of my colleagues that that somehow disqualifies you. Have you ever—have you ever seen a President of the United States appoint his enemies to his Cabinet?

Ms. BONDI. Exactly, Senator. I think many Presidents, including President Obama, were friends with his Attorney General throughout the years.

Senator KENNEDY. Okay. I want to also ask you about one of the suggestions of my colleagues. I wrote it down. He said he was concerned that, quote, “You would start with a name to prosecute and then look for a crime,” unquote. It made me immediately think of District Attorney Bragg in New York, who actually in 2019, ran a campaign, in large part, suggesting that if you elect me, I’ll prosecute Donald Trump.

Ms. BONDI. I believe there were others, as well, Senator.

Senator KENNEDY. Right. How long were you a prosecutor?

Ms. BONDI. Eighteen years.

Senator KENNEDY. Okay. Is there anything in your background to suggest that my colleagues’ suggestion that you would start with a name and then look for a crime? Is there anything in your background that would give him basis to say that?

Ms. BONDI. No, Senator.

Senator KENNEDY. Okay. Have you ever done that?

Ms. BONDI. No, Senator, and I think I have a lot of former colleagues sitting behind me who would back me up on that, as well.

Senator KENNEDY. Do you plan to do that as Attorney General?

Ms. BONDI. Of course not, Senator. I hope no Attorney General, going forward, would ever do that.

Senator KENNEDY. Well, I thank you for your time today. One need not be clairvoyant to see that you’re going to be confirmed, and you talked a lot about bringing us together today. I’ll make this suggestion. Senator Durbin talked about it. You can bring us together if you would just answer Grassley’s letters.

[Laughter.]

Senator KENNEDY. That will be a really good start because you’ll never hear the end of it—nor should you. The man is—he’s like a dog on a bone.

[Laughter.]

Ms. BONDI. Thank you, Senator.

Senator KENNEDY. Thank you very much.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Thank you, Senator Kennedy.

[Voice heard off microphone.]

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Welch.

Senator WELCH. Thank you very much. Thank you, Ms. Bondi. Three things. One, I do have some concern that whoever is the Attorney General, you or anyone, is going to be, presumably, will be under a significant amount of pressure at some point from the President. Attorney General Barr was. Attorney General Sessions was. And you’ve made it very clear your client is the Constitution. I think that’s very reassuring to us, but the President does have now a Supreme Court-provided immunity. And I just want to express to you my concern, and it really does align with what Senator Schiff said. You have what I regard as a very bad decision by the Supreme Court. The President should not be above the law. Never

has been. And my concern, on the basis of statements that President-elect Trump has made, is that he does identify people as political enemies—including Senator Schiff—and there may come a day where there is pressure on you. And I'm just going to express my hope that that, the independence that you've had throughout your career when it comes to the Constitution or pressure from a higher official, that you're going to choose the Constitution. So you don't even have to answer that, but it's a concern I share, I think, not just with colleagues here, but with many Americans.

My colleagues have made the case about weaponization in this administration, we can have a debate about that. But there's been a universal statement here that we want the rule of law to be the basis of going forward, so thank you for allowing me to say that.

Second, I'm really interested in your focus on how do we cut down on recidivism. I was a public defender, that's how I got started as a prosecutor in Vermont. Prosecutors and defenders were good friends. We each had a job to do. But my experience with my clients—and I'm excepting folks who they're really dangerous, you've got to lock them up, you've got to throw away the key. But the vast majority of people had a substance abuse problem, oftentimes had very limited education, oftentimes faced these incredible dilemmas that Senator Coons was talking about where they get fines and they get their license suspended, so the job they had, now they lose. So can you just elaborate a bit on what you want to do to inject some energy into dealing with cutting down on recidivism?

Ms. BONDI. Well, first—we can address it at the Bureau of Prisons level, of course, what we talked about, those are for the people who will be locked up in prison, serving sentences to make sure they get the resources that they need, upon release—98 percent of the people in the Bureau of Prisons will be released. I believe it's a mess right now—a mess. And when you look at an organizational chart of the office, assuming I may get confirmed, I was looking at all the slots, and my eyes went down to the bottom to Bureau of Prisons because of my career experience as a prosecutor and caring about what happens there for the very reasons you said—we need more drug courts, and you were talking about drug addicts, as well.

Senator WELCH. Mm-hmm.

Ms. BONDI. It's more than that, and we both know that it's also people who are dual diagnosed—

Senator WELCH. Right.

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Meaning you have a drug addiction but also mental health issues, and that's—Senator, that's something—

Senator WELCH. Well, I'd like to—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. I can't wrap my head—

Senator WELCH [continuing]. I would like to—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Around yet.

Senator WELCH [continuing]. I'd like to work with you on that. And then the third thing is that I mentioned this earlier. The consumer issues, the False Claims Act efforts that you can bring, the challenge to rip-offs in the civil sphere where companies are doing things that are just crushing our consumers and charging rip-offs—and overcharging. That is very, very important, and I hope that there will be as much emphasis on protecting consumers as there

will be on protecting public safety, which obviously is a high priority for you and for the Department.

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator.

Senator WELCH. Okay. Thank you.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you.

Senator WELCH. I yield back.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Schmitt.

Senator SCHMITT. Thank you. Mr. Chairman. I think you're doing incredible today. I'm not surprised. Mom, how are you doing? Good?

Ms. BONDI. I told her not to react, no matter what.

[Laughter.]

Senator SCHMITT. That's probably harder for her than it is for you. Well, listen, I—we've talked about this over the years. So for me, I didn't know—I didn't know any lawyers growing up. I'm trying to think when I actually met a lawyer in my life. I grew up in a really blue collar neighborhood, but I was attracted to the law because I felt like it gave guardrails for people to pursue their dreams. Right? That you would be on equal footing. And I think that your fights for the little guy—I referenced this in the opening statements—are admirable. And you know, you got some questions earlier about are you willing to stand up against corporate interests, or are you willing to fight back. I mean, I think you've demonstrated that. Right?

Ms. BONDI. I think we did it together when we were Attorneys General, as well.

Senator SCHMITT. Yes. Your client is the people, and it's your job to fight for them, because in these jobs—especially even a local prosecutor, I think is even—is an even more appropriate scenario. There's only one local—there's only one prosecutor in that county. So it's interesting when we have these discussions about some of these prosecutors across the country, and Senator Hawley and I know there's been a couple in Missouri and they're all around, when they decide not to charge violent criminals, there's nobody else who can do that. There's nobody else that can do that. One of the things that, when I was Attorney General, we were able to do when President Trump was in office—sadly, the Biden administration dropped this effort—was we had Assistant AGs deputized as assistant U.S. attorneys to help fight violent crime to add capacity. And, when, you know, there was a surge to take on some of the most violent criminals on the streets, we were there to help.

Those are the kind of partnerships I'm guessing that you'll look toward, right, to get back to the core mission of taking on violent crime and fighting for the little guy. So I wanted to give you a little bit of an opportunity to talk about that. And also, sort of, what's your vision—you're answering a lot of questions. What's your vision for the Department? I mean, what do—how do you see your role? How do you want to go do that? I think you're incredibly qualified to do it, but just in your own words, what are the things that you're going to focus on?

Ms. BONDI. You know, Senator, it's a—it's truly overwhelming when you look at the volume of that Department, the Department of Justice. It is the largest law firm in the world and manages the largest law enforcement agencies, and that's why, first and foremost, what I did when I was Attorney General, you surround your-



self with great people, and that includes Gail Slater, that includes my chief of staff, if I am confirmed, my Deputy, and so on and so on, and work from there, but look at each and every department. And I don't know if one department is more important than the other, but I will work very hard every day.

And as Senator Welch had said, it's not only fighting crime. I think that's just first and foremost on Americans' minds right now, but that's why there is an entire huge Civil Division that falls under the Department of Justice to protect consumers, to do the antitrust cases, to do all the Medicare cases, to do all of the other cases, so it's multifaceted. But first and foremost, of course, to keep America safe and restore integrity to that Department. I don't think I can stress enough that 72 percent of Americans have lost faith in the Department of Justice.

Senator SCHMITT. Yes, and I think that the belief that the American people need to have, again, is that people are going to be treated the same. As you said earlier, there's only one tier. There's not two tiers of justice, and I think that's—when you really dig down to some of the comments you've heard and questions, at least on this side, that's the big concern. I don't want it tilted in anybody's direction. You just want it to be fair, and you want, certainly, the top law enforcement official in the country to view it that way. I think you do, and I think your history, your qualifications, your demeanor, your character warrant a bipartisan vote. I hope you get it. I really do. You deserve it.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you, Senator.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Blumenthal.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Again, thank you, Ms. Bondi, for answering our questions.

I want to come back to TikTok, and we ran out of time when I was asking you before about the importance of the law that was passed overwhelmingly bipartisan majority here in the United States Congress. As you know, last year a Chinese hacking group—it was called Salt Typhoon—broke into several American phone companies, reportedly used that access to spy on the White House, the FBI, other sensitive Government targets. The threat of Chinese communist espionage goes beyond just watching. It also involved potentially shutting down our grids, other critical infrastructure parts. I assume you agree with me that Chinese cyberwarfare, espionage, malign influence is an existential threat to America.

Ms. BONDI. It is an existential threat, Senator, and also, I have not seen it yet, but from what I've heard about former FBI Director Wray's comments on "60 Minutes" regarding China sleeper cells within our own country, infiltrating our water systems, our natural gas lines, telecommunications—a very, very real threat to our country.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. I'm glad that we agree, and as you know, and as the Department of Justice has noted, it's not classified, so we can talk about it openly—the ByteDance is beholden to the demands of the Chinese government. It is controlled by the Chinese Government, and it, in turn, controls TikTok. Do you agree that ByteDance's control, ownership, exploitation of TikTok is a threat to American national security?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, this is pending litigation within the Department of Justice—

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Let me put it a different way.

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. And I can't talk about that at all.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. It's not pending litigation within the Department of Justice. It's in the courts.

Ms. BONDI. In the courts.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. And the Department of Justice is currently defending—

Ms. BONDI. Yes.

Senator BLUMENTHAL [continuing]. The constitutionality of American law.

Ms. BONDI. Pending.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Will you continue to defend the law passed by the Congress defending America's national security?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I—I cannot—it would be irresponsible for me to talk about anything, and it is pending litigation.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Well, you know—

Ms. BONDI. We can talk semantics all day long.

Senator BLUMENTHAL [continuing]. I was an Attorney General, and very often—

Ms. BONDI. I'm not trying to hedge on anything, Senator.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Oh, I'm—I'm—

Ms. BONDI. I just can't comment—

Senator BLUMENTHAL [continuing]. I'm having a problem—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. On any—

Senator BLUMENTHAL [continuing]. With the idea that you won't tell me that the Department of Justice will continue to defend against constitutional attacks, the law of the United States. When I was Attorney General of the State of Connecticut, I would say I have an obligation to defend the law of Connecticut against any attacks. You have an obligation, or you did, as Attorney General of Florida, to go to court when those laws were attacked. You have an obligation as United States Attorney General to do what this Attorney General is doing. Whether you agree with it or not, and, frankly, whatever the President thinks about that law, you have an obligation to defend it. This is an easy question for you. Will you defend laws of the United States of America against constitutional attacks? I'm asking you in general.

Ms. BONDI. In general, yes.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. And with respect to the law that would require divestiture of TikTok, which is a law passed by this body and supported by, I think, a majority of Members on both sides of the aisle, why can't you tell us that you will defend it?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I'm not hedging. This is all pending litigation, and I just can't talk about pending litigation, if confirmed as Attorney General.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. I have to tell you, with all due respect, that answer is unacceptable to me. Thank you.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Before I go to Senator Britt, I'd like to enter a letter into the record from former Department of Justice employees in support Ms. Bondi's nomination. This bipartisan group of attorneys includes several former AGs, Assistant Attor-

neys General, U.S. attorneys to share, quote, “strong and enthusiastic support,” unquote, for Ms. Bondi and attest to her, quote, “integrity—her integrity and devotion to the rule of law,” end of quote.

Without objection, I would enter these into the record. Hearing none, so ordered.

[The information appears as submissions for the record.]

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Britt.

Senator BRITT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Several of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have insinuated that your friendship with Donald Trump is a problem. My colleagues on my side of the aisle have leaned into this kind of exposing the hypocrisy, given what we have seen before from previous administrations, and I would just like to read something to you from 1961. “Washington, January 13. The Senate Judiciary Committee approved without objection today President-elect John F. Kennedy’s selection of his brother Robert as Attorney General. The vote came after a two-hour hearing”—would you like a two-hour hearing, by the way?

Ms. BONDI. Can we redo this?

Senator BRITT. Yes, that’s right. “The vote came after a two-hour hearing devoted in large part to praise of Mr. Kennedy. Forecasts that there would be severely critical questioning, especially from” Republicans, “proved incorrect. All fourteen committee members present voted to approve the nomination when it is formally made.” The New York Times. As it said, blood is thicker than water—meaning family bonds are stronger than any other relationship. I just think that that needs to be before the American people once again, and I appreciate you continuing to reiterate that you will serve the people of this great country and that you will follow the law.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you, Senator.

Senator BRITT. I’d like to move to something that has become another theme of this hearing, and that is Senator Grassley’s letters. So I myself sent a letter to our current Attorney General and, unfortunately, received the very same treatment. So in front of this Committee, Merrick Garland—Attorney General Garland had made a testimony that we found evidence to possibly contradict what he had said. On March 23rd, I came in front—he came in front of the Appropriations Committee where I was a Member, and I presented him with evidence that the DOJ had actively discouraged the enforcement of 18 United States Code § 1507, at the homes of Supreme Court Justices in the wake of the leak of the *Dobbs* decision, evidence that appeared that he had clearly either misled or misinformed this Committee, evidence that showed that the Department was putting politics above duty.

Section 1507, as you well know, makes it illegal to picket or parade near a judge’s residence in the intent—with the intent of influencing them in the discharge of their duty. It was openly and flagrantly violated on numerous occasions in the summer of 2022, yet never enforced by U.S. Marshals stationed at the home of the Justices, in large part because of the evidence that we showed that they had been actively discouraged from making arrests. When we asked Attorney General Garland why no one had been prosecuted, he said because no one had been arrested, really going back to the

fact that the U.S. Marshals in these slides were actively discouraged from making them.

On May 3rd, 2023, I led a group of Senators, many on this Committee, sending a letter to the Attorney General asking him for response to 19 questions by the end of May, and to this day, I have yet to receive any actual response to any of my questions. To Senator Grassley's second point, if you do get a response, which mine came almost a year late, it was just words on paper. And so what I'd like to know from you is two things. One, if confirmed, will you do everything in your power to have yourself or one of your top officials respond in a timely manner to those of us on this Committee? And second, since I am almost out of time, will you commit to working to help me get answers about why this happened in the Department of Justice so that we can ensure that it never happens again?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator, and it sounds like we're going to have to open an entire unit to handle Senator Grassley's letters to respond to them.

Senator BRITT. That's what we all like to hear.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Booker.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you, and I'm grateful to Senator Britt for bringing that up. It's probably one of the most bipartisan commitments. If we're going to fulfill our duties of the Constitution to give oversight, it's really important that we get timely responses, and I'm grateful for that.

I want to jump back right in where we were talking last is just about the crack and powder cocaine disparities that we discussed in my office. It's something that this Committee in a bipartisan way have done a lot on. We discussed about the 18-to-1 sentencing disparity, which came down from a 100-to-1. I've been working in good faith with people like Senator Grassley on trying to just get justice with that, move it as much toward 1-to-1 as possible. We know that actually in Florida, your home State, as well as 43 other States—

Ms. BONDI. 1-to-1.

Senator BOOKER [continuing]. It's 1-to-1. Thank you for making my question quicker. Will you commit to continuing the DOJ 2002 policy of just enforcing it as if it was 1-to-1?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, and I will look at that policy, if I am confirmed as Attorney General. I had no idea it was 18-to-1. That—I will look at that policy, if confirmed, and report back to you right away. It sounds like, if I'm confirmed, I have a lot of reporting backs to do right away.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you, but I—

Ms. BONDI. But I will, Senator, right away.

Senator BOOKER. Am I overly stating the fact that reading from your expression that you seem to think that 18-to-1, especially given what's going on in Florida, seems unreasonable?

Ms. BONDI. I was unaware that that was happening and why you would want it to be 1-to-1.

Senator BOOKER. Great. I know your sincere and heartfelt beliefs on abortion in general, and I respect that and our differences on it. But when it comes to medication and abortion, over two decades ago, the Food and Drug Administration approved the medication

abortion pill, mifepristone, as safe and effective. Decades of research continue to confirm the drug's safety. However, access to mifepristone was threatened by several lawsuits that second guess the FDA's expert judgment about the drug. The Department of Justice has vigorously defended the FDA's judgment about the safety and effectiveness, and I guess a lot of people are concerned about reversing a policy that could deeply affect people's access to mifepristone. I'm wondering if you would commit to continuing the U.S. Department of Justice's efforts to defend the FDA's judgment in lawsuits against mifepristone.

Ms. BONDI. And I was not aware of that, Senator, until we spoke, and I think I told you I will look at that policy. I was not aware of the policy. I will look at that policy. I am personally pro-life, I have always been pro-life, but I will look at that policy. I will not let my personal beliefs affect how I carry out the law.

Senator BOOKER. I wish I had more than 90 seconds to talk to about an issue that you've been so willing to talk to me about it, but the First Step Act implementation is, in my opinion, in a dire state. We had a bipartisan bill with 87 Senators voting for it—88 if Lindsey Graham was not off fighting the world's fight. I would like to make sure that you work with us to have implementation done. One of the reasons why it's so poorly implemented is because of the disastrous realities in the Bureau of Prisons. We've had bipartisan hearings here about the egregious stuff. The hearing was so disturbing that one of my colleagues on the other side came over and said, whatever I can do, let's work together. It is understaffed, and, therefore, a lot of the people that are supposed to be implementing the programs that would help for people to earn time credit to get out, the education programs that are proven to reduce recidivism, can't be done because the Bureau of Prisons is a disaster in terms of staffing and funding. People leave their Federal correctional officers jobs to go to State because they can make significantly more money. Is this a cause that—

Ms. BONDI. The morale is horrible.

Senator BOOKER. Yes. Morale is horrible. Is—do you feel a sense of urgency like I do to focus on the Bureau of Prisons to deal with the staffing issues and help with the full implementation of the First Step Act?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator. And yes, I spoke about that, I think, when you were in another Committee hearing. But yes, I will, of course.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you for the latitude, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Before I call on Senator Cruz, a question for both the nominee and you, Senator Booker. You were talking about this 1-to-1 equation. If your implication to her was that it could be done through her actions, then it seems we've been wasting our time trying to find a compromise between you and me on that subject for legislation.

Senator BOOKER. I didn't prepare for this hearing, sir. I didn't know I'd be asked questions.

[Laughter.]

Senator BOOKER. I look forward to working with you. I do believe that it should be done judicially, as well as with prosecutorial discretion.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Okay.

Senator BOOKER. It should be done legislatively along with—as well as prosecutorial discretion. Thank you, sir.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Cruz.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General Bondi, I congratulate you on an excellent job at this hearing, and I want to go back to the topic you and I discussed before, which is the politicization of the Department of Justice. I want to focus on a different aspect of it. We talked about the Department of Justice under Joe Biden and Kamala Harris being used to target the President's political enemies. We talked about it being used to protect the political friends and allies of the White House. But there's another aspect of politicization and lawlessness and that is refusing to follow the law, utterly defying Federal statutory law, and I think there's no area where this has been more egregious than as it concerns our immigration laws.

We have had 4 years of a wide-open Southern Border. My State, Texas, has borne a disproportionate burden as a consequence of that as 12 million illegal aliens have flooded into this country, and what the Biden administration has done, no other President in the history of America has done. The Biden administration has simply ignored the law, and when illegal aliens are apprehended, they release them. Federal law says they shall be detained, says they shall be deported, and, frankly, our constitutional system is not meant—meant to deal with a President who defies the law. Article II says the President shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed. This administration utterly defied the law.

I have said, somewhat tongue in cheek, Joe Biden did something I previously thought was impossible. He made me miss Barack Obama because Barack Obama, for all my disagreements with him, when it came to illegal immigration, he, by and large, followed the law. Barack Obama deported millions of people. The left got mad at him and called him the deporter-in-chief. No administration has ever done what this administration has done, which has said we are going to facilitate the invasion of this country, we're going to release 12 million people, and we are going to see Americans murdered, women raped, children abused and murdered. We're going to see drugs flood into this country—fentanyl flood into this country.

And so I want to ask you several things on this. First of all, in your experience, what are the consequences of open borders, and who pays the price when illegal immigrants and, in particular, violent criminal illegal immigrants are released into this country?

Ms. BONDI. American citizens, Senator, and I think they're paying—I know they're paying the price, every single day. We're seeing it. We're watching it. We've talked about Laken Riley, of course, multiple times, but there are multiple victims of violent crime in all of our States. And as we say now, every State is a border State. I was at the Border, not in your State, but in Yuma, Arizona, several months ago, and I firsthand—I saw the Border Patrol agents and Customs showed us IDs and drivers' licenses, Venezuela, from all of these countries, IDs just thrown on the ground and people were allowed to walk freely into our country.

Senator, I never knew the definition of a disposable child. I never heard that term in my entire career until I was there—a disposable child that the agents kept recognizing, a little boy——

Senator CRUZ. Yes.

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Coming over and over—you're familiar with it, I'm sure, same little boy over and over——

Senator CRUZ. And let me ask——

Ms. BONDI. And he had been trafficked.

Senator CRUZ. Let me ask because my time has expired, and the issue you're raising is so incredibly important. One statistic that every American should know is the number 300,000. There are over 300,000 children that this administration has lost—little girls and little boys who came here unaccompanied were in this administration's custody. They handed them over to adults, many of them not blood relatives, and they don't know where they are. I've never seen a single Democrat on this Committee ask one question about the 300,000 children. I want to ask you a commitment. Will you as Attorney General investigate and make every effort to find those children? And if they are subject to abuse, get them out of those abusive situations that the Federal Government has put them into?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Padilla.

Senator PADILLA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I'll just follow up to Senator Cruz's final comment with suggesting that we include targeting those children who are victims of unscrupulous employers, as well, and happy to follow up with the articles and reports to—as you prepare for this position.

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I'm sorry. Employers?

Senator PADILLA. Yes.

Ms. BONDI. Okay. I didn't understand that.

Senator PADILLA. Yes, many employers across the country who are employing and exploiting——

Ms. BONDI. Got it.

Senator PADILLA [continuing]. Dangerous conditions for——

Ms. BONDI. Yes.

Senator PADILLA [continuing]. These children that we're talking about. Ms. Bondi, we have even less time in this round than the first round.

Ms. BONDI. Oh darn.

[Laughter.]

Senator PADILLA. And I don't have some yes or no questions, but a couple of important issues I do want to make sure to cover for the record.

When you were a Florida Attorney General, you defended restrictive abortion laws, including mandatory waiting periods and parental consent requirements. If confirmed as Attorney General, would you advocate for similar restrictions at the Federal level?

Ms. BONDI. I will follow the law of the United States of America.

Senator PADILLA. Okay. Well, I'm asking this question because there's a difference between Federal law and Florida law. There's a difference between the law and your personal views, so how do you——

Ms. BONDI. And according to *Dobbs*, those are left to the States.

Senator PADILLA. How would you ensure that your personal views don't influence your decisions as Attorney General in cases involving reproductive health?

Ms. BONDI. Oh, my personal—no, my personal feelings would not influence, Senator.

Senator PADILLA. Okay. My next question is on the topic of gun violence, which continues to be a challenge and a problem in many parts of the country. As you know, the Department of Justice plays a key role in enforcing Federal gun laws and working to prevent gun violence. In the wake of the Parkland shooting in 2018, you expressed support for certain gun control measures in Florida, including raising the minimum age for firearm purchases and implementing red flag laws, which I agree with, I support, and they're proven to make a difference and to save lives. How would you use the position of Attorney General to advance these commonsense gun safety policies on a national level?

Ms. BONDI. First, Senator, let me say I am pro-Second Amendment. I have always been pro-Second Amendment. I will follow the laws of my State of Florida and our country, of course, regarding any gun laws. I did—I worked that shooting, meaning I was there when 17 family members were notified, I was there, that their children were murdered. Also, Pulse Nightclub. I also went to Nevada to help with the MGM shooting. The Attorney General at the time asked me to come out there. I believe over 60 people were murdered there. I am an advocate for the Second Amendment, but I will enforce the laws of the land.

Senator PADILLA. Okay. Well I appreciate that. I would certainly hope so, but any specific ideas that you have on advancing the commonsense gun safety proposals that you support as you were Attorney General? I gave you two examples—raising the minimum age for firearm purchases or implementing red flag laws. There's, I think, a growing national consensus on universal background checks.

Ms. BONDI. I would be glad to meet with you and review any legislation that you have, Senator.

Senator PADILLA. Okay. All right. I'll have a few seconds left, but thank you for your testimony. I know we asked some tough questions in this hearing. That's what the confirmation hearing process is supposed to be about. I know how to count and I know how to read tea leaves. It seems to me you're very, very, very, very likely to be confirmed, and I certainly look forward to working with you and your office on the issues that I've raised today and more. And I certainly look forward to seeing you demonstrate the independence and respect for the rule of law that you have suggested to the Committee today. Thank you.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you, Senator, and my prayers are with you in California, again, on the horrific fires and what you're doing—

Senator PADILLA. Thank you very much.

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. To combat them.

Senator PADILLA. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Blackburn.

Senator BLACKBURN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I know you're so pleased that we're about to the end of the day, and we thank you so much for your time, and your dedication, and your



desire to serve. And there are several things that we work together on here in this Committee, and we will need your help. Online privacy, we have never addressed. Senator Blumenthal and I have worked on that. The Kids Online Safety Act, which we are looking forward to finishing here, this—under President Trump's leadership so that we can protect children in the virtual space. And another portion of the work that I put a good bit of time into is combating human trafficking, and I know you have such a background in that, and we are so appreciative that you bring that background to the AG's position because this is an issue that has languished.

Now, Senator Cruz mentioned the 300,000 children that are not accounted for. Nearly 2 years ago, I wrote the HHS Secretary. It was at about 100—it was at 75,000 at that point, and the number has increased. And there are steps that could be taken that this administration, the Biden administration, has tossed to the side. We have legislation to address those, but, General Bondi, this is something that you can begin to do on day one. This administration has stopped doing fingerprints, they have stopped doing DNA testing, and because of that, we know that about 40 percent of the kids that come to that border are being trafficked, and there is a way to put an end to this. So we have—we think creating a database—a human trafficking database at DOJ is a good step forward. We do have legislation on that. Another thing that we're working on is having Child Protective Services actually record the interviews with children and adults to help to protect these children. But I would really like to get your commitment on the record for your help and a statement about the work that you have done in human trafficking and your commitment to ending that in our country.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you, Senator, and I have not yet reviewed your legislation, but I would love to review that legislation. Yes, I learned about the fingerprinting and the DNA when I was at the Border a few months ago, and I really couldn't believe that. And while I was there, I went to a rape crisis center, and what I saw and learned at that border, there is nothing humane happening at that border—

Senator BLACKBURN. No.

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. And so many women and children are being trafficked coming into this country. And when I was Attorney General for the State of Florida, I went to Mexico and I went to a safe house, and I met victims of human trafficking—women and children. I held babies who had been trafficked—

Senator BLACKBURN. Mm-hmm.

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. And what gets young drug-addicted—because they addict all these women to drugs when they're trafficked, young drug-addicted mother to break free from her captor? They were sending her to New York, and when they were going to do that, what did they do? They were going to kill her baby, and that's what got her to break away and get to a safe house. So I am committed to fighting human trafficking alongside you, and I have not yet read your legislation.

Senator BLACKBURN. I appreciate that. We appreciate so much your commitment to that. There is nothing compassionate about what is going on at that Southern Border, and we will need your attention to fix those issues. Thank you.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you.

Senator BLACKBURN. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Senator HAWLEY [presiding]. On behalf of the Chair, Senator Schiff.

Senator SCHIFF. Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's been suggested, Ms. Bondi, by a number of my colleagues that the concern Democrats have is that you are friends with the President. That's not our concern. It's not our concern that you're loyal to the former President. The President has a right to choose people who he believes will be loyal to him. Our concern comes when that loyalty to the President conflicts with your duty, conflicts with the Constitution, conflicts with your oath, and our questions have been designed to try to ascertain what you'll do when that inevitable conflict arises. And you may say that you believe that conflict will never come, but every day, week, month, and year of the first Trump administration demonstrated that conflict will come. Jeff Sessions may not have believed it would come to him. It came to him. Bill Barr may not have believed it would come to him. It came to him. It came to everyone. It will come to you, and what you do in that moment will define your attorney generalship, your public service, everything you've done up to that moment will be judged by what you do in that moment.

I would encourage you to talk to Secretary Mattis, someone who had broad respect and has broad respect of Americans on both sides of the aisle, who felt it incumbent on him to leave his post because he could not in good conscience continue to do as he was asked. I would encourage you to talk to Chris Wray, who perhaps, as well as anyone walked that difficult line, avoiding unnecessary and gratuitous fights with the former President, but at the same time, defending his work force, defending the democracy, and our institutions. I would talk to those who have been where you're about to be because you will surely be faced with that difficult challenge, if you are confirmed.

Let me turn to some California-particular concerns. I'm grateful for your acknowledgement of the trauma we've been through with the fires. That is not over. We will need your help in going after those who are committing arson, or who are looting, or the inevitable fraudsters who will take advantage of the situation to try to defraud taxpayers—

Ms. BONDI. Price gouging.

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. As well as price gouging. Indeed, on the subject of price gouging, and we talked quite a bit about the 2020 election. The 2024 election was about the high cost of living. I hope you will demonstrate a willingness to go after anyone who's engaged in price gouging. I think the oil companies are engaged in price gouging. The price of the pump in California is through the roof. Are you willing to take on even powerful interests like the oil industry if you determine that they're gouging consumers?

Ms. BONDI. I handled the BP oil spill, Senator, when I was Attorney General for the State of Florida. Right now as an immediate concern, I would be concerned about helping you in California with all the criminal acts that I'm sure are happening throughout your State with the looting, which is—and this is just from me watching it on the news. You've been there on the ground, but crime is ramp-

ant in California, and it's only going to get worse based on these fires and what happened. And price gouging is when people come in and they try to raise the price of goods—water, water—essential commodities—when people have lost their homes, and not everyone lives in a big home. Most people don't, and people have lost everything that they have had—

Senator SCHIFF. But I'm—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. And I am committed to working with everyone in California constantly to help the people in the aftermath of these fires—

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. We—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. And do—

Senator SCHIFF [continuing]. We will—

Ms. BONDI [continuing]. Everything that I can.

Senator SCHIFF. We will need your help on that. We will need your help on attacking the scourge of fentanyl. We can't solve this problem as a local government or State government or Federal Government alone. We need to work together on that. And let me ask one last question if I may, Mr. Chairman, important to a great many Californians and people around the country, and that is, will you respect their marriage? Will you respect marriage equality? Will you defend marriage equality?

Ms. BONDI. I will respect the law, absolutely.

Senator SCHIFF. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator HAWLEY. Thank you Senator. I'm sitting here in the Chairman seat, General Bondi. It's really—it's a great feeling of power, so—

[Laughter.]

Ms. BONDI. Do you have documents you want me to review?

[Laughter.]

Senator HAWLEY. Maybe some things I'd like you to sign. Let me just ask you here, and I think I may be your last interlocutor for the day, so congratulations. You've just done fantastic. Thank you for answering all of our questions. Let me just ask you about another of the abuses that this past administration perpetrated and that is still in place, and I'm referring to the October 2021 memo from Attorney General Garland targeting parents at school board meetings. Do you remember this?

Ms. BONDI. Yes, Senator.

Senator HAWLEY. What happened was, as I'm sure you recall, we now know the Biden administration, the White House, the Secretary of Education solicited a letter from the National School Board Association. They ginned it up. It was fake from beginning to end. They ginned it up, calling on—calling for law enforcement scrutiny against parents, tax-paying parents who were going to school board meetings inquiring what their children were being taught, inquiring about face masks, Critical Race Theory. And Attorney General Garland—you talk about bowing to political pressure—when the White House demanded he activate the FBI against these parents, amazingly, unbelievably, he did it, and he issued this memorandum in October 2021. All of this time later, that memorandum has still never been formally rescinded. Even after the National School Board Association withdrew their letter, admitted they had been wrong to call parents potential domestic

terrorists who were merely raising questions about what their children were being taught, Garland never apologized for it. He never did anything about it. It is still in effect.

Here's my question for you. As Attorney General, if and when you are confirmed, will you finally rescind that memorandum and do right on behalf of all of these parents who have been wrongly unjustly targeted by the FBI and DOJ?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I have not yet read the memo. If I am confirmed, I will read the memo and I will do the right thing, just like I told Senators on both sides of the aisle regarding their issues.

Senator HAWLEY. Good. I look forward to you doing that, and I would hope this is something you could do on the first day after you're confirmed to send a message to parents and law-abiding citizens everywhere. This shouldn't be a partisan issue. I bet the parents who went to these meetings, they're Republicans, they're Democrats, they have no partisanship, but they want to know that their First Amendment rights will be protected. And you rescinding that memo formally after, frankly, the current Attorney General lied to us about it for years, would send a tremendous message.

Let me just ask you about the one other thing, and this is something near and dear to me. We talked about this when you came to my office. The Department of Justice administers a fund called the Radiation Exposure Compensation fund. This is a fund that helps pay for the healthcare bills of Americans who have been exposed to nuclear radiation by the Government, through no fault of their own, in the West and other parts of the country. The Department of Justice has administered that program for years. Senator Orrin Hatch actually wrote the initial bill. It has been in existence since 1990. It's been supported by Senators from both parties. It's extremely important to my State because in the State of Missouri, we have a lot of nuclear radiation that has occurred that's still in our groundwater, still in our soil, not cleaned up yet.

My question for you is, since you'll be in charge of administering it, will you administer that program fairly and equitably? Will you defend it? Will you make sure that radiation victims who are under the statute entitled to compensation from their Government get what they deserve?

Ms. BONDI. Senator, I was speaking about that with someone yesterday because I did not know—again, there's going to be a lot, if I am confirmed, that I don't know. That's why it's so important to keep an open dialogue with every Senator from every State. And yes, I am committed to looking at that, and I did not realize you had that horrific problem in your State.

Senator HAWLEY. Thank you very much. Thank you for answering our questions, and with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back my time.

Chairman GRASSLEY [presiding]. Before I close down this meeting, I would enter into the record from a bipartisan group of attorneys who have served as Attorneys General in their respective States. This includes New York, Delaware, New Jersey, Illinois, and Hawaii. They write that Ms. Bondi has worked, quote, "across both State and party lines to solve problems," and a further quote that she is, quote, unquote, "a highly qualified nominee."

Without objection, that will be put in the record.

[The information appears as a submission for the record.]

Chairman GRASSLEY. You've done extremely well. I thank you for your testimony today, and I thank your family. Whatever pressures they felt, we apologize for it, but thank you for being so patient through all this process. You should be very proud. Ms. Bondi, you performed well, I think admirably as another adjective, and showed this entire country that you're eminently qualified to serve as Attorney General. If confirmed, you'll be a chief protector of the rule of law and I have every confidence that you're going to do a superb job.

Now, for information for the future, written questions can be submitted for the record until tomorrow at 5 p.m. Ms. Bondi, when you receive these questions, please answer and return them to the Committee as soon as possible because under our rules, that has something to do with when we can schedule action for your confirmation. You're excused at this point.

This Committee is adjourned. We will reconvene tomorrow right here—is it right here in this room? Right here at 10:15 a.m., to hear from a panel of outside witnesses in regard to Ms. Bondi's nomination.

The Committee is adjourned.

Ms. BONDI. Thank you, Senator.

[Whereupon, at 2:58 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

[Additional material submitted for the record for Day 1 follows Day 2.]



**CONTINUATION OF THE  
CONFIRMATION HEARING ON THE  
NOMINATION OF HON. PAMELA JO BONDI  
TO BE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

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**THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 2025**

UNITED STATES SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,  
*Washington, DC.*

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:22 a.m., in Room 216, Hart Senate Office Building, Hon. Charles E. Grassley, Chairman of the Committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Grassley [presiding], Cruz, Hawley, Tillis, Schmitt, Britt, Durbin, Klobuchar, Hirono, Booker, Welch, and Schiff.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHARLES E. GRASSLEY,  
A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF IOWA**

Chairman GRASSLEY. Good morning everybody. Welcome back for a second day of hearing on Ms. Bondi's nomination for Attorney General.

As I said yesterday, I want everyone to be able to watch the hearing without obstruction. If people stand up and block the views of others behind them or if they speak out of turn, it's not fair or considerate to others, so officers will remove individuals as they have previously. We didn't have any of these problems yesterday. I don't anticipate it today, but I just think we ought to make everything pretty clear.

Before we begin with opening statements from the panel, I want to go through a couple of bookkeeping items and explain how we're going to proceed today. I will give an opening statement and introduce the Majority witnesses, and I'll give the opportunity to Senator Durbin to provide an opening statement and introduce his witnesses, then we will turn to our witnesses for their opening statements. Following their statements, we will begin with the first round of questions in which each Senator will have 5 minutes.

Yesterday we met from 9:30 until 3 p.m. so that every Senator, both Democrat and Republican, could question Ms. Bondi. We heard from Senators Scott and Schmitt, who gave their strong endorsement of Ms. Bondi. Their introductions described her extensive experience, outstanding qualifications, and character.

Yesterday's testimony showed that Ms. Bondi is certainly experienced and capable to serve as our Nation's chief law enforcement

officer at this very critical time. She is very well qualified for the position, serving 18 years as prosecutor, 8 years as Attorney General for the State of Florida—Florida, the most third-most populous State in our Nation.

She will enact desperately needed changes at a Department that has been politicized and weaponized for partisan ends. With almost 30 years of experience behind her, she will restore both morale and law and order to the Department—badly needed—in need of strong leadership.

Her commitment to the rule of law emerged as a central theme of our discussions yesterday, and as I made clear in my opening statement yesterday, that is what I believe the Department and this country desperately needs.

Today, the purpose is to hear from an outside panel of witnesses, and we're grateful that all of you are here this morning to express your views on this nominee. I will go ahead and introduce the three Majority witnesses before I turn over to Ranking Member Durbin.

First is Dave Aronberg. Until just a few days ago, Mr. Aronberg was the elected Democrat State attorney for Florida's Fifteenth Judicial District. He served in that role for three terms since he was elected in 2012. Mr. Aronberg also previously served in the Florida State Senate and as a White House fellow in both Clinton and Bush administrations at the Treasury Department.

He has known Ms. Bondi since 2010, when he ran to be the Attorney General of Florida, a position Ms. Bondi obviously won. Notwithstanding their political differences, Ms. Bondi appointed Mr. Aronberg to be her drug czar to combat the opioid epidemic, and through that work he came to know Ms. Bondi very well.

Second, we have Mr. Nicholas Cox, who is Florida's longest-serving statewide prosecutor. He has served in that role since 2011. In his capacity as statewide prosecutor, Mr. Cox focuses on cases involving human trafficking, drug abuse, fraud, organized crime, gang violence, cybercrimes, and crimes against seniors.

Mr. Cox also previously served as a member of the faculty of Stetson University College of Law, where he taught trial advocacy, consumer law, counseling and negotiations, and criminal procedure. Mr. Cox has extensive experience observing Ms. Bondi's work as a lawyer and administrator. Ms. Bondi began her career as an intern in his office. While serving as Attorney General, she appointed him to his current office.

Third and last, we have Sheriff Emery Gainey, a career law enforcement officer with more than 40 years' experience. Sheriff Gainey has served as a sheriff of two counties in Florida. When Ms. Bondi served as Attorney General, he served as her director of law enforcement and director of victim services.

Through his work as law enforcement officer in Florida, Sheriff Gainey is very familiar with Ms. Bondi's work with State, local, and Federal law enforcement, as well as her work to address drug abuse, fight human trafficking, and victims of crime.

Thanks all of you for serving. Senator Durbin.



**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD J. DURBIN,  
A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF ILLINOIS**

Senator DURBIN. Thanks, Chairman Grassley. I want to take a moment to reflect on yesterday's session with Ms. Bondi. There seemed to be a meeting of minds on criminal justice reform and the pressing need to protect our children online. Those are good things. There are still some outstanding issues from yesterday's hearing that I'm struggling with. Let's start with a very important issue: Who won the election in 2020? Why are we still asking that question? For goodness sakes, we moved on to a new election. You would think that'd be over. The reason why that's still a relevant question is it gets to the heart of our democracy: the peaceful transition from one President to a new President by the will of the people without resistance and without denial. Does the phrase, "hanging chad" have any significance to our witnesses? It does to me and to every American.

In the year 2000, *Bush v. Gore*, there was a contest that went on into December and numerous court contests associated with it as to who actually won that election. There came a moment when Al Gore stood up and said, that's it, it's over, I've gone to court, I can keep going to court, but I don't think that's in the best interest of this country, I concede, George W. Bush won. You didn't hear Democrats at that saying, never say that in public, never concede that in public. We did. George W. Bush won the election because Al Gore decided to step out at a point when Bush was ahead. Period. End of story. That is what a democracy is all about: one person concedes, the other person wins, we move to the next President and, ultimately, the next election. But that's not the case in the year 2020.

We still have a candidate, in this case President Trump, who's in denial as to what happened in 2020, and as consequence, some characterize it a Big Lie, whatever you want to characterize it. It really is an important question because it gets to the fundamentals of anyone seeking a position in the Cabinet of this President or serving our Nation. Do they acknowledge the peaceful transition of power in 2020 from Donald Trump to Joe Biden? The answer is yes. The reason is we had the certification of the electoral vote—Senator Klobuchar remembers that well—and we went through the process we're supposed to go through in our Constitution. End of story.

But yet, when I asked that simple question of Ms. Bondi yesterday, she was unable to say just expressly, yes, Joe Biden received more votes than Donald Trump and was elected President in 2020. Why is that such a hard question? I don't understand. Why couldn't she state it plainly that that's what happened? When a nominee for Attorney General is afraid to state a simple fact, then what does it say about the future of our democracy and the credibility of our system of justice?

She not only refused to acknowledge President Trump's defeat in 2020, she also said, quote, "There was a peaceful transition of power." Let me repeat that: "a peaceful transition of power." Seeing the videotapes, what happened here on January 6, can you imagine if the news came on and said, did you hear what happened in London today? A mob stormed the Houses of Parliament, crashed

through the door of the House of Commons, took control of the British Parliament, and we hope that the police can take control back in a matter of hours so they can continue their business. What would we say to that? In London, in England, they went through what? A mob storming the Houses of Parliament, knocking down the door? Incredible. Whatever happened to that country? We thought they were leaders in the world. Now, reflect for a moment on January 6, 2021, and what we went through—all of us went through individually, being spirited out of the Capitol Building taken to a safe place because of a mob. That was not a peaceful transition of power.

And I want to just say, Sheriff Gainey, thank you for joining us today. You may have noticed—we all noticed, rather—we're not supposed to notice, we should—the men and women in uniform who protect us in this Chamber and throughout these buildings day in and day out. God bless them. But what they went through on January 6 is an outrage: attacks on them, several lost their lives as a consequence of what they went through, many were forced into retirement, and hundreds of people were arrested for trespassing and much more serious crimes. Donald Trump characterizes them as political prisoners. The people who attacked our policemen are characterized as political prisoners, and he promises that he's going to give a pardon to all of them on the day that he's sworn into office. I asked a basic question of Ms. Bondi as the chief law enforcement officer, which she would be as Attorney General, what do you think about the pardons? She wouldn't comment. Well, she made it clear she stood behind the police, but you can make it clear by saying to Donald Trump, this is a bad idea. Anyone who is guilty of violence—certainly guilty of violence should not be pardoned on the day that you're sworn in as President. So I was at least disappointed by her answer.

And then this Kash Patel issue. Kash Patel, I'm going to meet him next week for the first time. I've read an awful lot about him. There's an awful lot to read. He has a lot to say, and he's said it and he's published it in book form. One of the things he said is that he has an enemies list. Secret police agencies throughout history have an enemy list. The American FBI does not and should not. I think there's serious questions about this man, his judgment, and his political values that he would bring to office. Yesterday, Ms. Bondi embraced him as a person who's right for the job. I certainly don't feel that way. He's going to have to convince me. So there are questions raised.

Having said that, I want to concede two things. First, if I were setting out to hire an attorney, she certainly has the strongest résumé and should be hired. Number two, the testimony today, particularly from people in the opposite political party in Florida, is a testimony to the fact that she's been bipartisan and very effective as Attorney General. I will concede that point.

When she talks about the things she achieved, I'm impressed. I should be, but the question is when Donald Trump knocks on her door as Attorney General, and he will—if you question that, ask Jeff Sessions or ask Bill Barr—he will knock on her door and ask her to do something that's going to be a challenge ethically or morally. It's just his nature. He views that office as an office he person-

ally controls. He doesn't. The American people and the Constitution control that office, and we have to resolve whether or not Ms. Bondi is the person to be the next Attorney General.

Our first Minority witness is Lisa Gilbert, co-president of Public Citizen, a nonprofit organization with more than 500,000 members. The organization has an extensive record of investigating conflicts of interest in public corruption, and Ms. Gilbert will speak to the dangers of confirming someone with corporate interests as Attorney General.

The second witness, Mary McCord, executive director of the Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection. She's a visiting professor at the prestigious Georgetown Law Center. Prior to these roles, Ms. McCord served for nearly 20 years as assistant U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia, also served as Assistant Attorney General for National Security from 2016 to 2017, and Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General from 2014 to 2016. Mr. Chairman, at this point, I'll turn it back to you.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Thank you. You know, we have this tradition of swearing people in regardless of how honest you are and everything like that, so please arise. Would you raise your right hand?

[Witnesses are sworn in.]

Chairman GRASSLEY. I have seen all of you say "yes" to that. Thank you very much.

And now you may proceed with your statements, and we'll start with Mr. Aronberg and just go across the table that way. So please start out.

**STATEMENT OF HON. DAVE ARONBERG, FORMER STATE ATTORNEY, PALM BEACH COUNTY, AND FOUNDER, DAVE ARONBERG LAW, P.A., WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA**

Mr. ARONBERG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Durbin, Senators. In 2010, after serving 8 years as a State senator in Florida, I ran for Florida attorney general. I faced a fellow State senator in the Democratic primary and one of three Republican candidates in a potential general election. Pam Bondi was one of those three candidates. This was her first run for political office, and she was the only candidate in the race on either side whom I did not know. At our first candidate's forum, she came up to me with a big smile and told me her younger brother, who may be here today, Brad, worked with me at my old law firm as a summer associate and had very complimentary things to say. That was vintage Pam Bondi. My potential future opponent immediately disarmed me by ignoring partisanship to reach out to me as a human being.

Pam won her primary and I lost mine. I then endorsed my Democratic primary who faced her in the general election, and then Pam won that election, too. Despite the fact that I was on the other side of the aisle and did not support her campaign, Pam called me to offer the position as her drug czar to combat the opioid epidemic that was ravaging Florida and to shut down the State's ubiquitous pill mills that fed the Nation's addiction. She offered me this position because she knew from the campaign that fighting the opioid epidemic had been my career priority and an important part of my campaign platform. It did not matter that I had a "D" after my

name. She believed I was the best person for the job, regardless of party affiliation.

I accepted the position and received a little pushback from my side of the aisle, but nothing compared to what Pam Bondi received. At a party event, one county Republican chairman was so angry that he wagged a finger in front of her face to condemn her decision. He didn't argue that I was unqualified, just that she was resurrecting a Democrat's political career who had just lost badly in a statewide election. On that, he may have had a point. I served as drug czar, though, for 2 years and then got elected as a Democratic State attorney for the next 3 terms, 12 years until last week, but you don't wag a finger in Pam Bondi's face and get away with it. Pam's kind and genuine, and loves people, but she's also tough as nails. Pam met this guy's fire with fire, putting her own finger in the party leader's face to defend her new employee, and she didn't care that I was a Democrat or that she didn't know me that well at the time, or that one day this could help me run for office, which it did. She didn't do it because she one day hoped I would have her back at a Senate confirmation hearing. It was just the person she was and still is.

When AG Bondi and I began our anti-pill mill initiative, seven people a day were dying from prescription opioid overdoses, and there were more pain clinics in Florida than McDonald's in Florida. A year later, she convinced a reluctant Republican Legislature to pass crucial, long-overdue reforms, including a prescription drug monitoring program that dramatically reduced doctor shopping. AG Bondi used her bully pulpit and her bipartisan relationships to get it done. Today, Florida's pill mills are no more. The steady stream of cars from Appalachia that constituted the "OxyContin Express" are a distant memory, and countless lives have been saved because of our State's days as the drug dealer for the rest of the country is an ignominious part of our past.

Pam Bondi and I have always had our political differences, although that has never come between our friendship. I supported the Presidential campaigns of Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, Joe Biden, and Kamala Harris. I've been outspoken on cable TV and streaming channels on a host of legal issues, including with Professor McCord, including the dangers of targeting one's political enemies. I was critical of the Durham investigation, which led to questionable criminal cases and embarrassing acquittals. A prosecutor's job is to file the evidence and the law—without fear or favor. Pam Bondi is a 20-year prosecutor who understands this. Even if she does something as Attorney General of the United States that I disagree with, I believe she'll always remain tethered to the law.

And there are some important issues where she and I are in complete agreement, such as the need to stop the flow of deadly fentanyl that has become by far the largest killer within the ongoing opioid epidemic. We agree on tough punishments for those who engage in the modern-day slavery known as human trafficking, and for laws that allow victims to have their low-level crimes expunged, and to utilize the T visa program when needed. We agree on the need for treatment courts, which are proven to be a better alternative to incarceration with a lower recidivism rate for many non-

violent drug offenders. And we agree there should be a stronger response to the growing number of antisemitic incidents in our country, and especially on college campuses.

Senators, I'm grateful for the time to speak with you today and look forward to answering any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Aronberg appears as a submission for the record.]

Chairman GRASSLEY. Thank you very much. Ms. Gilbert.

**STATEMENT OF LISA GILBERT, CO-PRESIDENT,  
PUBLIC CITIZEN, WASHINGTON, DC**

Ms. GILBERT. Chair Grassley, Ranking Member Durbin, thank you for the opportunity to testify. I'm Lisa Gilbert, co-president of Public Citizen. Public Citizen is a 54-year-old nonprofit organization with 500,000 members and supporters across the country. We champion the public interest in the halls of power, working to ensure that our Government and our economy work for the people, not for wealthy special interests and corporations.

On behalf of our members, we stand in opposition to the nomination of Pam Bondi for the role of Attorney General. The mission of the Department of Justice is to work on behalf of the American people, keep our country safe, protect civil rights, uphold the rule of law. Unfortunately, Pam Bondi has numerous troubling potential conflicts of interest from her time as a lobbyist, which calls into question her ability to hold corporate wrongdoers accountable. I'll focus my testimony on our concerns about this problem.

Public Citizen recently examined the Federal lobbying disclosures and Foreign Agents Registration Act reports filed by Bondi and Ballard Partners, her lobbying firm. Our review showed that her client list is full of controversial clients, some of which stand to benefit directly from having their former lobbyist in charge of the DOJ. Over the last 5 years, she represented 30 clients from large corporations and contractors to a foreign government. In addition, during her earlier time as Florida Attorney General, a recent New York Times review found several pieces of evidence that seemed to demonstrate her general tendency to assist corporate allies, and corporate lobbyists' strong belief that Bondi was exceptionally accessible to lobbyists and amenable to the agendas of their corporate clients. Bondi had a large number of domestic clients, but today, I'll highlight just two: GEO Group, the Nation's largest private prisons company, and Amazon, an e-commerce giant.

Bondi was registered to lobby the first Trump White House in 2019 for GEO Group. Both DOJ and DHS Inspectors General had been critical of prison management of GEO Group, and they stand to profit substantially if the Trump administration's new immigration detention and deportation policies result in filling empty or underutilized beds in their facilities. As a real precedent for this concern, Public Citizen did research back in 2019, which showed GEO Group's contract dollars rose by over 40 percent in the first 2 years of the Trump term.

Now to Amazon. They're, of course, a very well-known tech company. Bondi was registered to lobby for them in 2020. In recent years, they've been investigated by the DOJ over injury rates and

workplace safety at their warehouses, been referred to the DOJ by a bipartisan group of lawmakers for potential criminal obstruction, and had their Robo Tax unit federally investigated over safety concerns. In addition, DOJ and the FTC recently reached a settlement with Amazon regarding children's privacy violations via Alexa, and, of course, Amazon also receives multi-billion dollar contracts from multiple Federal agencies, ranging from DOD to NASA.

Beyond these examples of potential domestic entanglements, Bondi was registered as a foreign agent lobbying on behalf of foreign governments and officials. To highlight just two, Bondi worked for both the Embassy of Qatar and a Kuwaiti investment firm. For Qatar, the goal was the improvement of their often-criticized human rights record before the 2022 World Cup. For the Kuwaiti investment firm, the work was an attempt to free a Russian money manager arrested in Kuwait on terms of embezzlement from her and her staff to the tune of tens of millions of government funds.

So to conclude, we believe a person with this deep record of controversial business and foreign government lobbying should not be considered for Attorney General. A well-functioning DOJ needs to be tough on corporate crime and work to improve the lives of our communities. This level of corporate entanglement just speaks to exactly the wrong incentives.

During the first Trump term, corporate enforcement plummeted at the DOJ, and we really fear a repeat of this pattern. Public Citizen, to that end, recently created a tracker of ongoing Federal investigations that are at risk of being dropped or weakened or modified. The tracker includes 237 investigations which has cases against 192 distinct companies. Shockingly, nearly one-third of those companies have known ties to the incoming Trump administration, and as highlighted throughout my testimony, Pam Bondi is no exception. To be clear, we do not think that this level of corporate alignment can be addressed simply by recusals. Bondi's broad representation of and lobby registration for corporate interests is much more than a list of potential conflicts. It instead represents an overall sense of prioritization. It's a net of potential conflicts that there really isn't a realistic escape from. If her nomination as Attorney General proceeds, we are really concerned that she will take actions that reflect the needs of these types of entities.

So with that, I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to present the views of Public Citizen and welcome any questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Gilbert appears as a submission for the record.]

Chairman GRASSLEY. Thank you. Sheriff Gainey, you may proceed.

**STATEMENT OF HON. EMERY GAINNEY, FORMER  
ALACHUA COUNTY SHERIFF, ALACHUA COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S OFFICE, GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA**

Mr. GAINNEY. Good morning, Chairman Grassley, Ranking Member Durbin, and the Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Thank you for allowing me to testify before you today on behalf of the United States Attorney General nominee, Pamela J. Bondi. My name is Emery Gainey. I am a 40-year career law enforcement officer who has served at all levels of law enforcement, to include the

sheriff of two Florida counties. It has been my distinct pleasure and honor of knowing and working with Ms. Bondi since 2010. As a member of her senior executive staff, I served as the director of law enforcement, victim services, and criminal justice programs when she assumed the Office of Attorney General in 2011, and I continued to serve in those capacities through her 8-year tenure as Attorney General. To this day, we maintain a very close professional, personal, and family relationship.

I want to speak this morning on Ms. Bondi's commitment to the just and proper enforcement of the law, demonstrated through her well-earned relationships with local, State, and Federal law enforcement partners throughout the United States. During her service as a prosecutor in Florida's Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, Ms. Bondi had well-established, deep-rooted relationships with local, State, and Federal law enforcement agencies. Upon becoming Attorney General, she immediately began the process of meeting all law enforcement leaders throughout the State of Florida to establish partnerships to ensure that our citizens and visitors to our State received the most effective law enforcement and victim services available.

One critical issue that she immediately took on was the emerging proliferation of deadly designer drugs, specifically those referred to as bath salts, that our State had been facing prior to her being elected as Attorney General. Ms. Bondi called together our stakeholders, to include prosecutors, law enforcement, our Office of Drug Control, our State lab directors, and many others, to not only seek to understand this new trend in our State, but to seek immediate solutions to stop the spread of these deadly substances that had taken the lives of our citizens. From these stakeholder meetings, she developed a strategy and a call to action to immediately outlaw these dangerous bath salt substances.

Utilizing Florida's rulemaking statutes and bipartisan support from Florida's Legislature, she was able to permanently ban the sale of these deadly drugs, despite the continuous efforts by those who altered their formulas in order to circumvent Florida law in an attempt to keep multiple versions of these harmful substances on some of the shelves of some of our retailers. These actions, in conjunction with our public and private partners, began to effectively address a growing trend in illegal substance abuse in our State.

Ms. Bondi's commitment to the rule of law was also evident in her taking the lead role, investigating and prosecuting crimes involving gang activities, organized retail theft, human trafficking, and a host of other criminal activities. She demonstrated her deep commitment to keep and restore the lives of victims of human trafficking through her leadership on Florida's statewide Council on Human Trafficking by investing in and supporting safe houses for victims. She also partnered with multiple private businesses to help combat human trafficking in both the sex and labor industries by establishing a zero tolerance toolkit to train their staff in identifying and reporting suspected cases of human trafficking.

I want to now focus on her compassionate side of her tenure where she was and remains a staunch supporter of crime victims and crime victim rights. One of her roles as Florida's Attorney Gen-

eral was the delivery of crime victim services. The Florida Attorney General's offices were the recipient of and administered the third-largest annual award of Federal crime victim compensation funds, in addition to State of Florida crime victim funds. Ms. Bondi dedicated a team of experienced victim advocates and crime compensation professionals to work with our local governmental and non-governmental agencies to ensure crime victims receive all the benefits allowable under the State and Federal laws.

Her personal compassion was constantly on full display when meeting with crime victims and their families. I stood behind her—beside her at crime scenes when she visited victims in hospital rooms, at family relocation centers, at conferences for victims of crimes, and many times one-on-one in her offices. She demonstrated her commitment to fairness and justice by not only rigorously seeking to hold perpetrators of crime responsible for their acts of violence, but she also demonstrated the same level of passion, care, and empathy for those innocent citizens who found themselves, through no fault of their own, a victim of some of the most horrific crimes committed by individuals against fellow human beings.

Mr. Chairman, the United States of America and the American people will be well served by confirming Pamela Jay Bondi as our next United States Attorney General. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Gainey appears as a submission for the record.]

Chairman GRASSLEY. Thank you, Sheriff. Ms. McCord.

**STATEMENT OF MARY B. MCCORD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
INSTITUTE FOR CONSTITUTIONAL ADVOCACY AND  
PROTECTION, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY LAW CENTER,  
WASHINGTON, DC**

Ms. MCCORD. Distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify about the importance of the independence of the Attorney General and the Department of Justice when making investigative and prosecutorial decisions.

Before my current position at Georgetown Law, I served for nearly 20 years as a Federal prosecutor under Republican and Democratic administrations, and 3 years at Main Justice, first as Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General and later the Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security. I stayed through the transition into the Trump administration before leaving in May 2017. I do not know Pam Bondi. I am here today to speak because of my long career at the Department, my reverence for the Department, and its mission and its independence.

The lawyers and law enforcement officials at the Department of Justice are critical to preventing the weaponization of the Department and preserving impartial adherence to the rule of law. For the Attorney General, this means taking seriously their oath of office, which is to the Constitution, not the President. It means recusal if their impartiality regarding any particular investigation or case could reasonably be questioned, and it means reaffirming long-standing policies, limiting context between the Department and the White House on specific investigations and cases.



The oath to the Constitution means that if there is inconsistency between what the President may ask the Attorney General to do and what the Constitution requires, the Attorney General must choose the latter. Although she is a member of the President's Cabinet and, therefore, expected to implement the President's policy priorities, her duties are limited by the Constitution. That means, among many other things, not targeting people or associations for investigation or prosecution based on protected speech or association, not executing searches without a warrant, not denying the equal protection of the law to all people within the United States. It also means that any prior role as part of the President's legal defense team is over, once the oath of office is taken. The Attorney General is not the President's personal attorney. She is the attorney for the United States.

When President Ronald Reagan nominated William French Smith, his former personal attorney, to be the Attorney General, Smith was asked during his confirmation hearing how he proposed to ensure that his former relationship would not compromise his independence. Smith responded, "I would have to be very conscious of situations where it could appear that, because of that relationship, a problem might be created." Smith recognized that legitimate concerns might require his recusal in certain cases to avoid the appearance of impropriety. As relevant to Ms. Bondi, her work defending President Trump during the first impeachment proceedings and public statements she has made about potential prosecutions of those involved in cases against President Trump could create, at the very least, the appearance of a lack of independence if she were to open investigations into people involved in those matters.

Similarly, any involvement in a civil case against the DOJ about which President Trump's attorneys have given notice and which seeks more than \$100 million for alleged rights violations rising out of the Mar-a-Lago search, could reasonably raise concerns about Ms. Bondi's impartiality that could only be addressed through recusal. In 1978, 4 years after President Nixon's resignation after Watergate, Attorney General Griffin Bell established the first of what has become known as the Department's White House context policy. It has been reaffirmed by Attorneys General under both Republican and Democratic Presidents ever since.

The DOJ policy recognizes the tension between protecting the Department's independence in making decisions about criminal and civil law enforcement, while also preserving the President's ability to perform his constitutional obligations to take care that the law be faithfully executed. The policy thus bars the Department from advising the White House about pending or contemplated enforcement actions, subject to limited exceptions, while permitting communications about the advancement of the administration's policies.

Just as in Bell's time, in order to insulate those who initiate and supervise law enforcement investigations, such as line prosecutors and their supervisors, communications with the White House about specific cases must involve only the Attorney General or Deputy Attorney General at the Department and the Counsel or Deputy Counsel of the President or Vice President at the White House. A

parallel White House policy memorialized by counsels to the President over multiple administrations and directed to all White House staff contain similar restrictions on context with all Departments and Agencies. The incoming Attorney General would be well advised to continue to adhere to the White House context policy and to urge the White House Counsel to do the same.

In closing, public respect for the Department of Justice begins with public respect for the Attorney General. That respect comes from the impartial adherence to the rule of law, free from improper political influence. The Senate should ensure that the next Attorney General is committed to taking the steps to earn that respect.

[The prepared statement of Ms. McCord appears as a submission for the record.]

Chairman GRASSLEY. Thank you, Ms. McCord, and now Mr. Cox.

**STATEMENT OF NICHOLAS B. COX, STATEWIDE PROSECUTOR,  
OFFICE OF STATEWIDE PROSECUTION, OFFICE OF ATTORNEY  
GENERAL, STATE OF FLORIDA, TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA**

Mr. COX. Thank you. I just want to say thank you very much for allowing me to be here today. For a man from a small town in Florida whose father was a trucker and mom was a mail carrier, this is—being before the United States Senate, this is a true blue honor, so thank you for allowing me to be here.

I know Pam Bondi. I've known her for about 35 years, and I've known her as a prosecutor. I've been her colleague, I've been her supervisor, she's been my supervisor, and I know her as the statewide prosecutor of Florida. And I hope to share with you a little bit today about what I know about Ms. Bondi professionally and what I know about her as a prosecutor. And what I do know about her is as to how she will handle the job of United States Attorney General, if you all so decide.

When it comes to criminal prosecution, Pam Bondi is unquestionably an ace. She did everything from batteries, DUIs, first-degree capital murder cases—she has experienced almost everything within the American justice system. From going to the scenes of these tragedies, to the courtrooms, to the witness rooms, holding hands with the victims of these crimes, Pam really has done it all. She appreciates the rules that make our criminal justice system the best in the world, and I wholeheartedly believe she will apply them and she will follow them.

Ms. Bondi is a tenacious but a very thoughtful prosecutor. Crimes of violence upset her the most. She and I tried dozens of cases together before juries, including first-degree murders. Her level of preparation was simply outstanding. Her ability to connect with and speak to them on an understandable level was excellent. Juries loved her, defense counsel respected her, and courts listened to her. It was clear that Ms. Bondi was there because she believed what she was doing, she believed in the case she was presenting, and she really did have that undefinable something that made everybody in the courtroom—juries, judges, maybe even defense lawyers sometimes—want her to succeed. She was excellent and still is.

Ms. Bondi is tough. She quickly earned the title of career criminal prosecutor at a very young age due to her very clear feelings

about repeat offenders and also her outstanding abilities in the courtroom. Her task was clear: prosecute the habitual offenders, seeking out the highest sentence possible, and she did just that. She wouldn't budge in plea bargaining with these repeat offenders that had proven time and time again they weren't going to comply with our laws. And she always held them responsible for their offenses. Due to her tough-on-crime approach, she found herself in court trying cases before judges and juries routinely, and she loved to be in the courtroom. She loves being in trial.

You know, the impact that prosecutors have on lives of people was never lost on Ms. Bondi. I sometimes find myself telling our prosecutors at the Office of Statewide Prosecution, please remember what we're doing here. Our jobs are great, we are so fortunate to have these jobs, but the amount of power that we wield and how this power will impact people is remarkable. Just the issuance of a simple subpoena can ruin a life, and that's an everyday thing for us. Pam Bondi understands that. She realizes it. As you've heard, she's done it for 18 years in the courtroom and also the 8 more as the Attorney General.

When she became the Attorney General, she didn't forget her experiences as a prosecutor. One of the things that she brought for me, as Florida's statewide prosecutor—which I'm very fortunate now to have continue under our current Attorney General in Florida, Ashley Moody—one of the things she did is she really shielded me from the politics. She understood how politics can impact what we do every day in a courtroom, and I will forever be grateful to both of them for shielding me from those politics. With all due respect, prosecutors, we don't usually want to be politicians. We just want to go in and do what we're supposed to do. And Pam Bondi made the job not only capable for me to complete, and, I feel, complete well, but she made it fun. She made it something I really enjoy doing, and I will be forever grateful to her and General Moody for allowing us to do that.

You know, I said a lot more in my statement and I'll let my statement stand. I know it's in the record and you all will hear it, and I've got about 12 seconds left. But I do want to say that on the question of independence, I've experienced times with Pam Bondi where I've said to her—it's a different role than what you all are talking about—but where I've said to Pam Bondi, General, no, we can't do that. She might disagree with me, she may let me know she disagrees with me, but in the end she'd look at me and say, do what you've got to do. And that happened several times—a lot. She understands that, and I think she will be an excellent Attorney General.

Chairman, if I might say to my colleagues at the Department of Justice, the prosecutors, as Mr. Aronberg said publicly, they have nothing to fear from Pam Bondi as a prosecutor. And to the contrary, I truly believe they will love working for her. Pam Bondi understands the rule of law, she understands the impact on lives, she understands what we do, and I believe wholeheartedly that all of them will love working for Pam Bondi like I have. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cox appears as a submission for the record.]

Chairman GRASSLEY. I thank all of you for being very careful about not going over the 5 minutes. Thank you all very much for that.

I'm going to start with you, Mr. Aronberg, and my staff gives me information that maybe you don't mind telling people that you vote for Democrats and that you voted against President Trump. If you—I'm just saying that you probably don't mind us saying that or you wouldn't have told us. You clearly have political differences with Ms. Bondi, and I'm sure you disagree with her on many issues. So what would you say to critics of Ms. Bondi who believe that she is, quote, unquote, "too partisan" to serve as our Nation's Attorney General?

Mr. ARONBERG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those critics should talk to her political opponents in the past, like me, like Dan Gelber, who was the Democrat who beat me, who ran against her in the general election. They're friends. It's rare these days that you see people who battle it out in a general election remain friends after all these years. She had relationships across the aisle within the Florida Legislature. I know because I was in the Florida Legislature before I ran for Attorney General, and I saw it up close. I think some of the criticism comes in that she is loyal to President Trump, and she is, she is. But I never believed that if asked to do something illegal, that she would knowingly do that. She would never step across the line. In my mind, I can't imagine her doing that.

I echo what Nick Cox said, is that she's always been tethered to the law. She understands as a 20-year prosecutor that prosecutors have to follow the evidence and the law. And because of her background as someone who is not a super partisan—she had never run for office before running for Attorney General, she doesn't come from the world of politics, she comes from the world of prosecutors and the criminal justice system—that I do believe that she will act in a way that is always tethered to the law and will not cross that line to making purely political decisions.

Chairman GRASSLEY. You worked with her on drug issues very much. Seeing how Ms. Bondi handled the opioid crisis in Florida, how do you think she will handle the crisis on a national level?

Mr. ARONBERG. I think she's going to get tough on fentanyl across the Border. I don't know the specifics on how she plans to tighten up on it, but I know she's going to make it a priority because when we had an opioid epidemic in Florida and we were the drug supplier for the rest of the country, she went to a reluctant Republican-dominated Legislature and told them we needed to pass this Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, something that had been stalled for a decade in Tallahassee, and she got it done. I had run on that platform. If I had been elected attorney general as a Democrat, I don't think I could've persuaded that Legislature to do it, but she had the credibility. It took Nixon to go to China. It took her to convince a recalcitrant Republican Legislature to pass these needed reforms. So I don't know specifically what she will do, but I know that she will not shy away from standing up to people in her own party who will disagree with her on it.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Mr. Cox, you've worked with Ms. Bondi for three decades, and you're also the longest-serving statewide pros-

ecutor. Some have suggested that Ms. Bondi's lobbying and political career will influence her decision-making. In your decades of working with her, have you ever known her to make a decision that was illegal or unethical?

Mr. COX. Absolutely not. Ms. Bondi, as Mr. Aronberg referred to, and quite honestly, Ms. McCord could tell you, as well, you know, being a prosecutor is about focusing on the law and focusing on the evidence and focusing on, really, what's right. That's what our job is, to do justice. I know that she's embraced that. She's practiced that. I have never seen anything untoward in any of the cases I ever worked with Ms. Bondi.

Chairman GRASSLEY. And, Sheriff Gainey, you served as Ms. Bondi's director of law enforcement and victim services. You spoke in your opening statement about Ms. Bondi's work with State and Federal and local law enforcement. What would you say is Ms. Bondi's biggest achievement as far as Attorney General, from the perspective of you as a law enforcement officer?

Mr. GAINNEY. Senator, her willingness to partner with law enforcement. It's not uncommon for her to call together sheriffs and police chiefs, State law enforcement and Federal to seek from those leaders and directors what the issues are. Florida's a large State, those issues are vast and they change from one State to the other. She sits down with those partners, discusses those issues, and then fiercely do everything in her power to assure that the men and women in our State and our Federal offices in our State have the resources and the tools to do their job. It was not uncommon we had—during legislative sessions, Sheriff's Association met in her office, the Florida Prosecutors' Association met in her office. She provided space so we can be there to consult with her and her team and her staff on a regular basis as we addressed issues before our Legislature every single year.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Durbin.

Senator DURBIN. Sheriff Gainey, let me follow up with you on a subject. You're aware of what happened here January 6 in the Capitol Complex and the law enforcement personnel who were attacked by the mob, the demonstrators, and a number of them—hundreds of them have been prosecuted and some are serving sentences for violent felonies against our police. Was there anything like that in your background dealing with Ms. Bondi where she's been called on to make a decision on standing up for law enforcement in similar circumstances?

Mr. GAINNEY. Senator, every single day, quite frankly. She had worked with—we, unfortunately experienced law enforcement officers killed in the State of Florida. She was there not only to work with those law enforcement agencies and those families, with respect to prosecutors, whether it was our statewide or our local prosecutors or our Federal prosecutors, she was a fierce supporter to make sure that the laws of the State of Florida was enforced, that men and women of law enforcement were supported, and their families knew that she supported them on a regular basis.

Senator DURBIN. Mr. Cox, you talked about several instances, experiences you had with Ms. Bondi when she was under political pressure. Could you tell us a little bit more about one of those?

Mr. COX. Well, candidly, there was some pressure at the beginning when Mr. Aronberg mentioned about the—oh, I apologize.

Senator DURBIN. You want to pull that microphone close to you.

Mr. COX. That is the first time anyone's asked me to pull a microphone closer.

Senator DURBIN. I may change my mind. Go ahead.

[Laughter.]

Mr. COX. You wouldn't be the first, many judges have. Ranking Member Durbin, yes. Right from the beginning when Mr. Aronberg mentioned about the problems we had with the opioid epidemic and the pill mills, she was actually—I will say this—was getting some pushback from our Governor, Senator Rick Scott, and it was about the PDMP. And I was there when she sat down with Senator Scott—I believe Sheriff Gainey was there with us, as well—and we had a couple sheriffs, and we were speaking with Ms. Bondi about it. She called the Governor—now Senator, I apologize—right then and put him on the phone with us, and had us discuss with him the need for the PDMP, the Prescription Drug Monitoring database, and—which ended up making a massive change. And to the Senator's credit, he sat down and listened to us, asked us questions, and in the end, she convinced him we needed it. And as I recall, it was within the next week or two that he came up here and he announced his support for our PDMP. You know, she didn't have an agreement with a person who she loves. I mean, she very much got along very well with then-Governor Scott, and she confronted him about it and changed his mind.

Senator DURBIN. Now here's a track record.

Mr. COX. Yes, sir.

Senator DURBIN. This newly elected President—as former President, fired two Attorneys General under circumstances where they disagreed with him. Senator Sessions in one instance and Bill Barr on another, and they were both fired. So it's pretty clear that he is not adverse to taking a different position than his Attorney General and having a pretty short temper when it comes to dealing with it. That's the reality of what we see on the record—not once but twice. Can you understand our concern about whether she would react positively if he put that pressure on her?

Mr. COX. I can understand your concern, yes, sir. But the Pam Bondi I know as a prosecutor, where her heart is as a prosecutor, and having my experience with her myself telling her no when she was the Attorney General, I believe she will stand up to it. I truly believe that. She understands what our duty is. She understands, I think, the boundaries of the ethics that she mentioned several times yesterday. She understands all of that, and she's a true prosecutor. Yes, sir, I believe she will do it.

Senator DURBIN. Thank you. Ms. Gilbert, on this question of conflicts of interest and recusal—Ms. McCord, I invite you to answer this, as well, in the short time left—you seem to suggest that she can't recuse herself out of her current situation, her background as a lobbyist and attorney representing private interests, that she might be able to find some response to it but can't overcome what you called systemic—or whatever characterization you used. Haven't we had Attorneys General in the past with backgrounds in the private sector facing similar circumstances?

Ms. GILBERT. We have had lobbyists become Attorney General in the past, but nowhere near the scope and scale of Ms. Bondi with 30 clients of her own in just the last 5 years, and coming from a firm that represents such a broad swath of corporate America. It would be very hard for her to remove herself from every situation that touches on these corporate interests. One easy example, I mentioned, GEO Group. There's not a pending enforcement action or investigation into them. There is one into their top rival, the other biggest private prison company, CoreCivic. She would not be expected to recuse herself from that. However, ramifications from it could impact GEO Group. And so it's just one small example of how interconnected corporate America is and how hard it will be for her to remove herself from all these situations.

Senator DURBIN. I think my time is up. Are you next up?

Senator TILLIS [presiding]. I'll be acting on behalf of the Chair, and I am next in the order.

Mr. Aronberg, you ran in a primary, got defeated by a Democrat, endorsed that Democrat in the general election against Pam Bondi, and Pam Bondi hired you?

Mr. ARONBERG. Correct.

Senator TILLIS. Thank you.

Mr. ARONBERG. Correct, Senator.

Senator TILLIS. Thank you. And so, and actually, I can tell that you've still got a liberal leaning because in the same sentence that you complimented Pam Bondi, you took a shot at a Republican-led Legislature by calling them recalcitrant. So, I mean, folks, you need to pay attention to that. This is somebody who's been a foe, who probably spoke against her in a public setting, and she had the temperament and the good judgment to look past your political views and hire you into her organization. I think that says a lot about people. In fact, I've made friends with the guy that ran against me, and nobody on the Democrat side seems to like him anymore.

So, Ms. Gilbert, this lobbying thing, and I don't mean this—in the time allowed, can you talk about specific things that she lobbied for versus the firm that was retained? I don't know if Qatar hit the Bingo card today. It may have for you, but then when Ms. Bondi explained that this was \$115,000 a month for a firm that was handling human trafficking cases, is that bad?

Ms. GILBERT. [Voice heard off microphone.]

Senator TILLIS. So I'm assuming not, so let's go to the next one. What specifically did she or the firm do for these—yesterday, she focused it with Senator Booker on the abysmal state of the Bureau of Prisons. So she's clearly going to drill down on that. What, in your due diligence, what specific acts did she—not her firm—did she engage in that makes you feel like her sincerity toward Senator Booker yesterday was not genuine?

Ms. GILBERT. I can't speak to her specific sincerity or motivations, but I can look at—

Senator TILLIS. Speak specifically to what she lobbied for that you expressed as a concern for the Bureau of—or for the private prisons, specifically what she lobbied for.

Ms. GILBERT. Absolutely. So from what we know about her engagements with GEO Group, as mentioned in my testimony, they've been condemned for not having a lot of—

Senator TILLIS. I get it. Private pri—there are problems with them, but I guess I'm trying to get to what specific issues do you think she carries into this office that would undermine her credibility in trying to do a better job with the Bureau of Prisons? I'm just trying to get to the facts. I'm not an attorney, I don't even play one here, but I'm just trying to figure out what specific acts did she do. Other than the—around here, it'll be on the Bingo card for Kash Patel because we know where that's headed. But what specifically for any of the high tech, any of them, what specifically did she advocate for, other than the by reference concern that we may have? That's all I want to know from your organization. What specifically have you found about Pam Bondi in a filing, in an argument, in a letter that she specifically said that you believe would undermine her credibility?

Ms. GILBERT. Yes, and I think from our perspective, it is about the appearance of impropriety. It's actually not about—

Senator TILLIS. Okay. Actually not just appearance, so you don't have a specific example.

Ms. GILBERT. It's about the engagement with this entity and—

Senator TILLIS. Yes, okay.

Ms. GILBERT [continuing]. And the fact that—

Senator TILLIS. So I get it, I get it. But in the same way that we know the facts about Qatar now because we ask about it, it'll be interesting to see what specific role that she played. Thank you. I appreciate you being here.

Ms. McCORD, you worked in the Obama administration. Were you a career or political?

Ms. MCCORD. The entirety of my time at the Department of Justice, I was in a career position.

Senator TILLIS. You were a career position? Okay. Thank you. And, Mr. Gainey, it sounds like—in the same—I did the same thing or I have done the same thing that I think Pam Bondi has done, just call somebody out of the blue and say we got to take it a different direction. Isn't it also, I mean, she got a lot of blowback from the Republican Legislature for some of the work that she was doing, to point that Mr. Aronberg made. Is that true?

Mr. GAINNEY. That is true, Senator. In fact, it's the call that Mr. Cox referenced. It was on a Saturday morning, to be more specific.

Senator TILLIS. So I bet if we went back at a time, like I sometimes get attacked, I bet if we went back at the times, we'd probably find several examples where people were taking shots at her from her side of the aisle for doing something that's proven to be very important. So she strikes me as somebody that can—that was her power, that was her influence back in her time as prosecutor, and she stood up to them and did the right thing, and didn't really care whether or not she got reelected. Is that correct?

Mr. GAINNEY. That is correct.

Senator TILLIS. Thank you all. On behalf of the Chair, Senator Klobuchar.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Thank you very much. Thank you, also, Senator Durbin, and thank you to the witnesses before us today.



I'm going to start with you, Ms. McCord. Welcome back to the Committee. If we could just go through these answers because I think it's really important to put this outside of personal friendships, all these things, whether or not the Attorney General is a Democrat, Republican, who's in charge. And you testified that the Attorney General is not the President's personal attorney. In fact, the person is the attorney for the United States, the AG is. And you referenced Attorney General William French Smith's comments at his nomination hearing. Can you talk about the importance of maintaining this distinction that the AG is the attorney for the U.S. and not for the President?

Ms. MCCORD. So it's important not only to have the confidence of the career prosecutors and law enforcement officials within the Department, but also to the country because the loyalty does need to be to the United States and to the Constitution. And there may be times, and I think Senator Durbin pointed out times in the previous Trump administration where the Attorney General did not show sufficient loyalty to Donald Trump, and those Attorneys lost their positions.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Okay. Thank you. And in your written testimony, you described the Justice Department's White House contacts policy that was established following the Watergate scandal. It's been reaffirmed by AGs under both Republican and Democratic Presidents ever since. The policy states that, "All communications about particular cases from the White House or Congress must be referred to the AG or other high-level officials in the Justice Department in order to preserve the integrity and independence of DOJ investigations from political interference." Yesterday, I asked Ms. Bondi if she agreed with former Attorney General Mukasey, Republican Attorney General, that any attempt—his words—any attempt by the White House—his words—to interfere with a case is not to be countenanced and any call to a line assistant or to a United States Attorney from a political person relating to a case is to be cut and curtailed. She affirmed that she agreed with that statement. You also testified to a parallel White House policy, Ms. McCord. Can you speak to the importance of both the Justice Department and the White House maintaining and abiding by strict contacts policies?

Ms. MCCORD. Well, historically, like I said, post-Watergate, these policies have been instituted under Republican and Democratic administrations. In fact, Don McGahn, the White House Counsel in the first Trump administration, reissued that White House contacts policy in January of the first term because he recognized the importance that it not just be a DOJ policy, but that all within the White House staff know not to pressure the Department—or other Departments and Agencies when it comes to specific matters.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. And how can Congress exercise its oversight authorities to ensure that the policies on both sides are being followed?

Ms. MCCORD. I think starting with the questions you asked yesterday, Senator Klobuchar, is a good start, and if it should come—if there should come any time where it seems like these policies are not being complied with or if there is a refusal to adopt or continue

those policies, those are something that Congress should be very concerned about.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Okay. Ms. Gilbert, you've been before us many times on the subject of antitrust, and as you know and I know and many Democrats and Republicans on this Committee know, monopolies will go very far to preserve their power. Tech-funded groups, for instance, spent hundreds of millions of dollars against Senator Grassley and my bill, which was, of course, not just supported by consumer groups, but also by groups as conservative as the NFIB, the Small Business Association, because of the unfairness of monopoly tech companies putting their own products at the top of their search engines and the unfair competition that results when they have that kind of power. You know there are cases out there right now that are really important on monopolies, *Google*, *Apple*, *Live Nation-Ticketmaster*, *RealPage* that are being litigated to their fullest. Why is it important that the new AG continue these cases to protect consumers, enhance competition, and—just a general question about the rules of the road—and how important this is as Senator Grassley and I reintroduce our bill.

Ms. GILBERT. Absolutely. Thank you for that question and for your and Senator Grassley's great work in this space. We are hopeful that the new Department of Justice will continue the cases that have been begun over the last 4 years. We've been really excited to see the strong forward momentum for dealing with corporate concentration, taking on monopolies head on. It's so important for consumers. Public Citizen is a consumer organization, and as we think about regular people and engaging with the markets, you know, if they are squeezed out, if they can't sell their products, if there isn't fair competition, if small businesses can't get ahead, these are all problems for regular Americans. And so just really hopeful that the DOJ will continue what they've started that these cases roll on. And then I also want to put a plug in for your fantastic bill, yours and Senator Grassley's. We hope as the DOJ continues, so can the work here in the Senate on this important policy to stop self-preferencing, as you mentioned.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. All right. Well, thank you, and I wanted to thank also others on the panel for their important work when it comes to pill mills and what it was and is going on with these horrible, horrible situations where people are getting hooked while people are profiting off of it. Thank you.

Senator TILLIS. On behalf of the Chair, Senator Schmitt.

Senator SCHMITT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We've heard a lot about the newfound concern that my Democrat colleagues have about independence in the AG's office. And given over the last 4 years, it is ironic. Ms. McCord, I do want to ask you, you're talking about the importance of independence. Is it concerning to you that Eric Holder, while he was Attorney General, described himself as Obama's heat shield and his wingman? Is that concerning to you?

Ms. MCCORD. That's probably not the best description of the job of the Attorney General, but I think the record probably speaks for itself and speaks differently.

Senator SCHMITT. Okay. Loretta Lynch met with Bill Clinton just days before the FBI interviewed Hillary Clinton on the investigation as it relates to emails. Does that meeting with the spouse and

former President of the subject of the investigation, is that concerning to you as it relates to the appearance of independence?

Ms. McCORD. My understanding of that is a chance encounter at an airport on the tarmac, and that does not actually give me concern.

Senator SCHMITT. Okay. I don't think that's what happened, but that's an interesting characterization of that. But, I think—and I'm going to switch to you now, Mr. Cox, because these are sort of related. I think the frustration a lot of Americans feel and why the decline in trust and faith in the Department of Justice is they saw exactly what happened over the last 4 years, which was a very obvious attempt to try to jail a political opponent, and I'm not going to ask you to comment on that.

Mr. COX. Thank you.

Senator SCHMITT. Yes. I'm not going to ask you to comment on that, but I think that's why you see a lot of the questions that are asked by my Republican colleagues on this Committee. It is just this lawfare. We don't want to see it continue, but what we've seen over the last 4 years is a total disgrace. And I think for the hard-working men and women in the Department of Justice who aren't engaged in this, you know, it's affected the Department's reputation and why I'm such a big believer in Pam Bondi and what she can do, and try to restore credibility to an Agency that has been weaponized and politicized, and get it back to its core function, which is objectively administering justice and taking on violent crime.

And I just want to ask you, in your experience with Pam Bondi, this has been what she's done. She's a career prosecutor. Right? I mean, you can see her embracing this role of working with, whether it's the U.S. attorneys or other law enforcement around the country, of taking on violent crime because we need leadership there. We've got a lot of, you know, crime has gone up, and I'm from a State that has, you know, St. Louis and Kansas City, and we had partnerships when I was Attorney General with the U.S. Attorney's Office to take on violent crime. And when Joe Biden came into office, those were severed for political reasons. Which is wrong. It's not a partisan issue. Do you see that as a role that she will play as Attorney General?

Mr. COX. Absolutely, but what you just described about the relations with law enforcement is what not only she practiced, she encouraged all of us around her to do. And I could not agree more with you about your assessment of Ms. Bondi on that. Look, we're prosecutors. I mean, in her heart, Pam's a prosecutor, and, you know, our job is to go in and fight crime. But, you know, we don't take lightly, those of us that are career prosecutors, that our job is to do justice. I mean, that's what the courts have said, and at her heart, 100 percent, that's Pam Bondi. It really is. So yes, and she—Pam loves law enforcement. I mean, let's not kid each other. We all love law enforcement, and everybody and everything they stand for. And so, yes, sir, I believe she would do that with law enforcement and prosecutors. She did it in Florida.

Senator SCHMITT. And we'll talk offline about your role. It's an interesting role because in Missouri the local prosecutors are the

ones—we don't have—there's no office of statewide prosecutors, so I'm not going to ask you about that. I just find that's interesting.

Mr. COX. Not common.

Senator SCHMITT. It's not a common thing, but in your experience in serving with Pam Bondi, did you find her committed to enforcing the law equally and impartially?

Mr. COX. Oh, yes, sir, I did. I mean, that's what we're supposed to do. And she embraced it, yes, sir, she did.

Senator SCHMITT. Thank you.

Mr. COX. She is complete prosecutor, she is a total prosecutor, and that's why when I speak to her independence, it's because she believes in it, and it's in her heart. I mean, you know, seeing her recently, I mean, I know that's where she is. I really truly meant it when I said to my colleagues at the U.S. Department of Justice, if confirmed, you're going to love working with Pam Bondi.

Senator SCHMITT. I couldn't agree with you more, which is why I was thrilled to be able to give that introduction yesterday of Pam. I think she's going to be an outstanding Attorney General, and I think, like I said yesterday, I think she deserves a bipartisan vote, not only in this Committee, but on the Senate floor. Thank you for being here today.

Mr. COX. Thank you, sir.

Chairman GRASSLEY [presiding]. Senator Welch, you're next.

Senator WELCH. Thank you very much, and I thank all the witnesses. I read your statements, and watched, and I want to thank the Florida folks for being here on behalf of somebody that you know well and worked with a long time. She clearly is a competent person and has quite a résumé, so you reaffirmed that.

A couple of questions that I have are less about her and her qualifications and more about this question that looms out there, where there's a mutual concern here about not using the justice system for political reasons. And there's a point of view with my Republican colleagues it's been used that way in the prosecutions against Donald Trump. I don't agree with that, but I hear them on that. And there's a concern on my part, and I think a lot of our—others, that Donald Trump has made very explicit statements that he intends to pursue political adversaries and he's named them, including my colleague, Mr. Schiff, Liz Cheney.

And, he's a—he is now a President who enjoys the benefit of the—he will be a President who enjoys the benefit of the immunity decision by the Supreme Court. I strongly disagree with that decision. I don't think anybody is above the law. That's the whole basis upon which our country was founded. But I take him seriously when he says he wants a prosecutor to go after his political adversaries. And the tradition in the Justice Department, since Watergate, has been to really create a near firewall between the administration—the Executive and the Justice Department because of its special role. And all of you are law enforcement so you just know how awesome that power is that you have, and you have to have restraint, as well as aggression.

So how does an Attorney General handle a President who has already put an immense amount of pressure on Bill Barr, one of his Attorney General, who did it on Mr. Sessions. And shouldn't we take seriously the President's threat—President Trump's threat

that he's going to go after his political adversaries? And how do we deal with that? And how do we assess that in terms of this decision? I'll ask you, Ms. McCord, to start.

Ms. McCORD. Thank you, Senator. You know, as we know that in the first Trump administration, Attorney General Sessions made the decision to recuse himself from the Russia investigation because of his work with Donald Trump during the campaign and because of meetings he had had with the Russian ambassador during the campaign. He recognized that appearance of impropriety and the need for independence. He also appointed a special counsel to take over that investigation. Those are the kind of steps that are required when—when there could be pressure, and there was pressure put on Attorney General Sessions. Indeed, I think forever after that recusal decision, he fell out of favor with the President and, ultimately, was fired. But those are the things that an independent Attorney General needs to take seriously and needs to do to demonstrate that commitment to independence from political influence.

Senator WELCH. You know, what's difficult here is that none of us know whoever is in that job and is confronted by a very determined President Trump to do something that, from the prosecution point of view, may not be appropriate—a political prosecution of an adversary for payback—there's no way to know how any of us, as committed as we are, would be able to withstand that pressure. But I'll just—I'll talk to you, sir. Yes, you worked with Pam Bondi and have a high opinion of her. I'll give you the opportunity to say how she would be able to withstand what I think is inevitably going to be an enormous amount of pressure by the President at a certain point when he decides, directed toward whoever serves as his Attorney General.

Mr. COX. Let me start out by saying I've been fortunate enough not to be in that situation because I've had Attorneys General that I work for, like Pam Bondi and Ashley Moody. However, a prosecutor's job is a solemn thing. The impact we have on lives is—you mentioned the power, and you're absolutely right. It's got to be respected, it's got to be appreciated, it's got to be embraced. And sometimes that means—I've been in positions before where I've thought, if I do or say this, I could lose my job. But you've got to be willing to do that. I don't know how else to say it. It's tough. It's very tough. My job, fortunately, is really not a political job because of my AGs.

Senator WELCH. Right.

Mr. COX. But you do have to be in the position sometimes when right is right to have to stand up and buck up.

Senator WELCH. All right. Well, thank you very much. I yield back.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Cruz.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to each of the witnesses who are here today. Mr. Cox, let me start with you.

Mr. COX. Yes, sir.

Senator CRUZ. You worked with Attorney General Bondi for over 35 years.

Mr. COX. Yes, sir.

Senator CRUZ. Can you speak to her leadership style and then, how she managed the Attorney General's office?

Mr. COX. Fair—of course very kind, but firm. She was very decisive. That's what I liked about her. But in her decision, Ms. Bondi always listened. There were times she and I disagreed, several times, many times where we would disagree, and she would hear me out. Sometimes I'd change her mind, believe it or not. It wasn't often, but it happened. But sometimes, you know, she would listen to me and go the way she felt. That was her job. She was the Attorney General. But she is very firm. She's very decisive.

And I will tell you, the number of times I walked with her—she appreciates my role and our role as prosecutors. The number of times I would walk away from her, and she wouldn't agree with my decision maybe on a particular case, and she would tell me, do what you got to do. I mentioned it earlier in my statement. That's the Pam Bondi that I worked with. That's why I'm so confident in her that she can fill this role.

Senator CRUZ. So I think the single most important responsibility that General Bondi will have at the Department of Justice is restoring integrity to the Department. I think over the last 4 years, we have seen a pattern of politicization and weaponization of the Department of Justice that has done massive damage to that institution, a storied institution that is incredibly important for the rule of law. Speak to your assessment of General Bondi's integrity and her ability to restore integrity to DOJ.

Mr. COX. Might I just answer that first off by saying she's a prosecutor, and that's what we're supposed to do. I've spoken to it several times, and I won't repeat myself, Senator. At her heart, she believes in the system. She believes in what we do. I don't think it gets—with all due respect to everybody in this room and that may be listening, I don't know how much more serious it gets on impacting lives than being a prosecutor and being a judge who has to handle these cases. And she's always respected that. You know, I mentioned in my statement, she's never forgotten, she's never lost her humanity, and she hasn't. You know, she, might I say—I don't know if this is answering your question—Pam Bondi likes people, and she wants people to like her, and I don't know that that's so bad for an Attorney General, either. But she appreciates the impact of this job. I hope I've answered your question, Senator.

Senator CRUZ. All right. Mr. Aronberg, let's turn to you. So you and I have known each other 30 years. We were classmates in law school. It's good to see you. Welcome to the Swamp. You live in Palm Beach, which is a lot nicer weather than it is up here, and you spent 3 terms as the elected State attorney in Palm Beach County. You're a Democrat, you ran as a Democrat, were elected as a Democrat, and you also, in this last election, voted for Kamala Harris. Is that right?

Mr. ARONBERG. Correct.

Senator CRUZ. You've also worked closely with General Bondi.

Mr. ARONBERG. Correct.

Senator CRUZ. In your judgment, describe—same question I asked Mr. Cox, how would you describe her leadership style, and how would you describe her integrity?

Mr. ARONBERG. Well, Senator Cruz, in full disclosure, we didn't—we weren't just classmates. You and I, we lived in the same dorm—

Senator CRUZ. Yep.

Mr. ARONBERG [continuing]. First year before either of us had any gray hair.

Senator CRUZ. And burn those pictures.

Mr. ARONBERG. Fair enough. Mr. Cox is right. She has a very hands-on style. Everyone in the office knows her. She was not isolated from the rest of us. She walked the hallways. She was friends with everyone. She brought her dog to work sometimes, even though it probably violated code. And it was a big dog, a St. Bernard. And she's a very likable person.

Senator CRUZ. It didn't have a barrel of whiskey under its neck. Did it?

Mr. ARONBERG. Only in Bugs Bunny cartoons. She's a very likable person, and I think you'll find that from everyone who knows her in Tallahassee and throughout Florida. It's hard not to like her. You can disagree with her politically—and she and I have our political differences—but as far as a boss, she never tried to big time anyone. She's a person like everyone else. She is—she expects the best from people, but she has a real human touch about her.

Senator CRUZ. Now, you also worked with her very closely, in particular, in going after pill mills. Can you describe what you and she were able to accomplish together on that?

Mr. ARONBERG. We were able to shut down the pill mills. Florida was the pill supplier for the rest of the country. Ninety-eight of the top hundred doctors who dispense pills were in Florida. It was a national embarrassment. The "OxyContin Express" was from Appalachia down to Florida. People would come down, buy their drugs, use, abuse, and then go home and sell them for a profit. We ended that. She appointed me to be the lead person, but we could not have done it without her. She was the person who got the Legislature to change the laws. We couldn't have done any of that without that. She was the one who convinced them to pass the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program. That was indispensable. So it was her leadership that really led to a dramatic decrease in the number of deaths from opioid overdoses.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you.

Mr. ARONBERG. Thank you.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman GRASSLEY. Senator Hirono.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all for testifying today.

Professor McCord, I'd like to ask you about January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol. Can you succinctly define "domestic terrorism"?

Ms. MCCORD. Domestic terrorism under the United States Code is a crime—it is an act of violence that is a crime under Federal or State law that is done with the attempt to influence the policy of government through intimidation or coercion.

Senator HIRONO. Based on that definition, were some of the acts committed on January 6 acts of domestic terrorism?

Ms. MCCORD. Certainly the acts of violence that violate the Criminal Code do seem to have appeared for many of the people

based on their own statements. Many of the defendants in cases that are being prosecuted, they seem to have been done to influence the policy of the Government—and specifically to not certify the Electoral College ballots on January 6.

Senator HIRONO. Yesterday, Ms. Bondi refused to disavow President Trump calling the insurrectionists hostages and patriots. What effect would President Trump's pardoning of these criminals have on our country?

Ms. MCCORD. It would have an——

Senator HIRONO. What's the message if that were to happen?

Ms. MCCORD. Senator, I believe it would have an enormous impact on the criminal legal system, and I would say also on our judiciary. In fact, I published a piece about that this morning in the Atlantic. We have our Federal judges here, across—appointed by Republicans, Democrats, and President Trump himself, who uniformly have condemned the crimes of those who have been convicted due to their attack on the U.S. Capitol, that anything close to a blanket pardon, which is what has been suggested but not promised by Donald Trump, without individual consideration of cases, would severely undermine these Federal judges and undermine the criminal legal system.

Senator HIRONO. We know—and this has come up with one of my colleagues. We know from the disastrous Supreme Court immunity decision that President Trump pretty much has a free pass to do what he wants. An unfettered President is even more dangerous if the Department of Justice is not independent. So based on your extensive experience of the DOJ, are there warning signs that we should watch for to signal that the DOJ has lost its independence?

Ms. MCCORD. Senator, I think as we've seen sometimes in the past, that when there are concerns among the career prosecutors and law enforcement officials at the Department who have responsibility over investigations and cases, when they have felt pressured, many of them have actually resigned. We saw that during the first Trump administration with respect to some of the prosecutions involving Michael Flynn and Roger Stone.

Senator HIRONO. So I take it that people resigning is one indication that all is not well, that independence is maybe not what's in practice. I'm just wondering, if we were to ask the Attorney General, if the President ordered you or suggested or hinted that you go after his perceived political enemies, would the Attorney General be able to cite attorney-client privilege and not respond to us?

Ms. MCCORD. I don't want to give a legal opinion on that, Senator. I do think that that is the type of pressure that we are looking to an Attorney General to stand up to, from the White House, and I certainly want to take Ms. Bondi at her word when she, under oath, yesterday said she would exercise independence.

Senator HIRONO. Well, the thing is, what's deeply concerning about Ms. Bondi is that she's very loyal to President-elect Trump, and he demands a hundred percent loyalty of all of his people. So yesterday, Ms. Bondi could not say that President Biden had won the election in 2020. That is a basic fact. And I think that the—it was her loyalty to President-elect Trump that basically made it hard for her—impossible for her to say that President Biden had won the election. So that is concerning.



Based on what we heard yesterday, I'm very concerned that, if confirmed, Attorney General Bondi will say yes if and when President Trump asked her to do something illegal. And the thing is that not much of what President-elect Trump will do is going to be deemed illegal because of the Supreme Court's disastrous immunity decision. So I'm really struggling with how are we to know that all is not well in terms of the independence of the DOJ? One thing would be if they adopt a policy—or the President adopts a policy that he will not order the DOJ around, even if this incoming President has said the Justice Department is basically his law firm. So if you all—if you have any further suggestions, aside from people actually resigning to indicate that the kind of independence we are looking for is not being followed, I would welcome that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator BRITT [presiding]. And, Senator, Hirono, your time is up. Thank you.

Senator HIRONO. This is fine.

Senator BRITT. Thank you. Let's see. Mr. Cox, I'd like to start with you. I heard your comments with regards to both Pam Bondi, who we are here for today, and you heaped praise on Attorney General Moody, who you work for, as well. I'd like to say a public congratulations to her being named Senate designee and be the next Senator from Florida. Oh look, I get to deliver the news to you. So DeSantis just came out—

Mr. COX. Wow.

Senator BRITT [continuing]. And said she will be joining us. I am thrilled. I mean, as a mom of school-age kids, to have another woman sitting right here next to me fighting for the people that we serve with what I understand is her brilliant intellect, her ability, and her passion for the people of Florida, which I know she will bring to the United States Senate. I cannot wait to call her a colleague. So on behalf of me—and all of us, welcome to Attorney General Moody, new Senate designee. We look forward to her taking the ranks.

Mr. COX. Might I respond or comment just briefly?

Senator BRITT. Sure. Absolutely.

Mr. COX. Senators, you're going to love Ashley Moody. She is a wonderful person to work with. She's brilliant, I—that is wow—

Senator BRITT. Wow. Right?

Mr. COX. Thank you for telling me.

Senator BRITT. Oh, I'm so excited, I got to tell you.

Mr. COX. The best thing about it is, I can say I learned that in the United States Senate.

Senator BRITT. In the United States Senate, that's right, and hopefully she will be up here just in the next few days after we confirm Senator Rubio, who's going to do an exceptional job as Secretary of State. So congratulations to Ashley and cannot wait to serve with her.

Mr. COX. Thank you.

Senator BRITT. So now let's talk about another amazing woman, Pam Bondi. I have heard you over and over again when you respond to questions talking about her, I think you said she is fair, kind, and firm. You have talked about the fact that she is transparent and impartial. I would like for you one more time to say to

the American people, based on your previous work with Pam Bondi, can you explain how she'll continue to operate, you believe, in that manner, in a fair and transparent manner as she takes the helm of the Justice Department?

Mr. COX. Because she believes in everything you just questioned me about, and she practiced it in Florida. You know, whether you agreed with her or not, Pam Bondi, like I said, is a person who really likes people. I think we should welcome that into Government. I think that sometimes we lose sight of—prosecutors—I'm going to speak to myself—we can lose sight of the fact, as the Ranking Member mentioned, the immense power that we have and we get caught up in it. Pam Bondi doesn't get caught up in those kinds of trappings.

Senator BRITT. I love it.

Mr. COX. Yes. She loves people, and she at her heart, again, is a prosecutor. As Mr. Aronberg had mentioned, nobody has anything to fear from Pam Bondi. She is going to be a breath of fresh air, if you all send her there.

Senator BRITT. Absolutely, and I think we need to restore those very things, fairness and transparency, to the Department, and I look forward to her taking the helm. She's going to do that for the American people, and it's an exciting new day, so thank you so very much.

Mr. COX. Thank you for the news.

Senator BRITT. Absolutely. We are thrilled. So, Mr. Aronberg, I learned obviously that we need to talk with you offline about getting those stories on Cruz. Right? But—and also that she has a St. Bernard. I have a Newfoundland, so who knew that we both had love for the large dogs.

And, Sheriff Gainey, I know that you've had an opportunity to work with Pam Bondi, as well. I want to talk to you specifically, both of you, about the opioid epidemic—about what we've seen with drug trafficking. I mentioned it yesterday. We heard Pam lean into this, as well, but there is nowhere in my State that I travel where someone does not tell me a story about losing a loved one to opioid abuse, addiction, overdose. And so tell me from your experience how she works with State and local law enforcement officers, State and local leaders. I'm a big believer that local leaders know best, and you have people that come to DC that somehow get here and believe that we become experts on every issue, and the truth is you have to talk to the boots on the ground to learn what to do, how to do it, and to affect real change. And so can you both speak to her relationships with State and local law enforcement and work force, and how you believe she'll carry that to the Department of Justice, please?

Mr. ARONBERG. Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Senator Britt, and thank you for the news about Attorney General Moody. I hope Nick Cox still has a job when he goes home.

[Laughter.]

Mr. ARONBERG. When I was her Attorney General Bondi's drug czar, we were visited by Gil Kerlikowske, who was President Obama's drug czar nationally, and it was a very productive meeting. I still have the pictures from that meeting. Not once was there ever a discussion that, well, he's from the Feds, we shouldn't trust

him, he's a Democrat, we shouldn't trust him. None of that. We were just trying to get the job done. And so she's seen it from both perspectives, as a State official working with the Feds and now to be a national—to be a Federal official working with the locals.

One—the person who can best talk about how she has a great relationship with local law enforcement is Emery Gainey because he was the liaison. She had a special liaison within her office to make sure that she had a seamless relationship working with local officials. I saw it, but Mr. Gainey is the best to talk about it.

Senator BRITT. Yes, and, Sheriff Gainey, if you don't mind leaning into that, I am out of time but would love to hear your response.

Mr. GAINNEY. Thank you, Senator. Unequivocally, that's one of the four leaning rules of Pam Bondi: work with our law enforcement leaders, learn and understand the issues that each of those face. I mentioned earlier, we are a large State, as you well know, so there are diverse issues that the law enforcement, when in our State, that others have to deal. Pam listens to those. She encourages those. She asked for advice and wanted know what's happening in the community. Just the whole pill mill and the bath salt issue was brought to her by a Panhandle sheriff, quite frankly. What we've learned in law enforcement, we often see these things first. We start seeing these trends, and then we try to get them to our legislative leaders and our Cabinet leaders to say, this is happening in our State. Sometimes they listen to us. Other times they don't.

Pam listened. She listened right away. She immediately sought out to understand what was causing that issue and then sought legislation to get it done against some of our Republican legislators at the time who didn't want it, but she—her tenacity prevailed. She got it done. Our State is a safer State because of Pam Bondi.

Senator BRITT. Wonderful. Thank you so much. Senator Schiff.

Senator SCHIFF. Thank you. Thank you to all the witnesses for being here today. Greatly appreciate your testimony.

Ms. McCord, you testified—thank you for all your good work over the years. You testified before the Committee last September on the repercussions of *Trump v. United States*, the case on Presidential immunity. You wrote, I think in your written testimony, “There is nothing stopping a President from directing the investigation of his political enemies, journalists, or activists, even where there is no basis for doing so.” As you will recall from the hearing yesterday, I asked Ms. Bondi a number of questions about what her intentions were, how she would respond if the President asked her to investigate someone, whether she thought there was a factual predicate for a case, for example, an investigation against Jack Smith or Liz Cheney. For the most part, she refused to answer any specific question. It didn't give me a lot of confidence in her willingness to push back against those kind of improper orders from the President.

What should the Attorney General do if a President is now, by virtue of this dangerous Supreme Court decision, immune from prosecution from violating the law and using the Department of Justice to do it? It doesn't mean the Attorney General should go along with it. What should the Attorney General do if the Presi-

dent says, I want you to investigate such and such political opponent?

Ms. McCORD. Well, first of all, I would say the immunity decision, right now, as far as we know, applies only to the President. And so there's no immunity for Attorney General Bondi if she were to engage in illegal activity or unconstitutional activity in carrying out a directive of Donald Trump. But I think before we even get to that, it would be important for her to make clear that she is not going to direct her Department attorneys or the FBI to initiate unfounded investigations. The Department of Justice, throughout all of my tenure there, always, we followed the facts and the law, and did not target any person for investigation based on political reasons. So it's really—that's why the independence is so much more important even now in the wake of that decision because she is the first person to have a position of standing up to the President.

Senator SCHIFF. I also asked Ms. Bondi whether she would commit to preserving the evidence that was gathered as a part of the January 6 investigation by the Department. She refused to commit to even preserving the evidence. Are there laws in place or is it merely Department policy not to destroy evidence? Should we have any confidence that that evidence will be preserved?

Ms. McCORD. Well, there certainly are Federal Records Act obligations that require that records be maintained, and so I think that she would be well advised to consult with attorneys—career attorneys who specialize in that in the Department of Justice and be guided by their counsel. And it's certainly important in this case—in these cases, as in every case prosecuted by the Department of Justice or investigated, to maintain records.

Senator SCHIFF. And if I could ask both you, and Ms. Gilbert, a recusal question. So, Ms. McCord, maybe let me ask you about where you think the circumstance would be appropriate for her to recuse herself, vis-a-vis her prior representation of the President, and, Ms. Gilbert, in terms of her corporate clients as a lobbyist, when would it be appropriate for her to recuse herself from working on or influencing Department decisions, vis-a-vis her former lobbyist clients?

Ms. McCORD. Senator Schiff, I think with respect to her previous, you know, personal representation of Donald Trump, she needs to be very concerned, as William French Smith was when he took on this job for President Reagan, having been Reagan's personal attorney, that anything that would appear to be improper, that would show impartiality, she should recuse from. So, for example, investigations into anyone who was involved in the first impeachment proceedings or prosecution because she defended Donald Trump in those proceedings. Even any investigations or prosecutions into those involved with the cases against Donald Trump because she has made public statements about prosecutors and investigators needing to be targeted potentially. She's used the term "the bad ones." I'm not sure what that means in legal parlance.

So I think these are the types of matters, including also civil matters. There is—Donald Trump has, through his attorneys, filed notice of a civil action against the Department of Justice based on the search of Mar-a-Lago. Clearly, it would be improper for her to take any part in that—in responding to that case.

Senator BRITT. Thank you, and I just would like to note that, obviously, yesterday, she clarified that she'd never represented President Trump in a personal matter but actually worked there directly with the White House. Also, it's interesting because we have seen this body confirm members who have lobbied for, you know, the Chinese Communist Party and confirmed them to positions at ODNI, and it didn't seem that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle had an issue with that. And it's also interesting that we continue to hear General Sessions being brought up at these hearings over and over again. I do want to remind people, obviously he is from the great State of Alabama, but not one Member of the Democratic Party in this actual hearing voted for him through his confirmation process. So I just want to make sure that we set the record straight on that, as well. But thank you to all of our witnesses.

Senator SCHIFF. Mrs. Britt, I know I'm out of time.

Senator BRITT. Yes.

Senator SCHIFF. Would it be possible for the other witness to answer? She didn't have an opportunity because the clock ran out?

Senator BRITT. You know, I think we are out of time, but I appreciate that, thank you. And thank you to our witnesses for testifying today. I know that some of you traveled long and hard to be here, and we are grateful that you did that.

The record will stay open until 5 p.m. tonight, and so if you would like to add something to that, you are more than welcome to, and all written questions are due at that time, as well.

The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:02 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

[Additional material submitted for the record for Day 1 and Day 2 follows.]

Opening Statement  
Pam Bondi  
Nominee for Attorney General of the United States

Thank you, Chairman Grassley, Ranking Member Durbin, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. It is an honor to be nominated to serve as the 87th Attorney General of the United States. I am grateful to President Trump for his confidence and to this Committee for its consideration. To the Senators who made the time to meet with me regarding my nomination, I appreciate your insight and look forward to working with each of you to solve the important issues facing our nation.

I would not be here without my family, which has taken over a large portion of the gallery behind me. And today especially, I miss my father, whose example continues to inspire me every day.

From the moment I began to work as an intern at the Hillsborough County State Attorney's Office, I knew I wanted to spend my life as a prosecutor. I spent 18 years handling countless prosecutions and jury trials, ranging from driving under the influence to domestic violence and capital murder. Nothing has shaped my career or vision of the law more than my experience as a prosecutor.

In 2011, I was elected Attorney General of Florida and proudly served for two terms. In that role, my top priority was keeping Florida safe and standing up for victims and their families. When my term began, Florida was overwhelmed by pill mills and opioid deaths. I fought for tough legislation and worked to eliminate these drug dealers from our state. We also protected human trafficking victims by raising awareness, providing critical resources, and creating additional safe houses.

On the civil side, we worked to protect consumers. We tackled everything from overreach by big tech companies to off-label prescription marketing. We partnered with State Attorneys General from both parties and federal agencies across administrations.

If confirmed as United States Attorney General, my overriding objective would be to return the Department of Justice to its core mission of keeping Americans safe and vigorously enforcing the law. That requires getting back to basics—prosecuting violent crime and gang activity, stopping child predators and drug traffickers, protecting our nation from terrorists and other foreign threats, and

addressing the overwhelming crisis at the Border. The Department of Justice must also return to defending the foundational rights of all Americans, including free speech, free exercise of religion, and the right to bear arms. That is what the American people expect and deserve from the Department. If confirmed, I will do what it takes to make America safe again.

Making America safe again also requires reducing recidivism. We must fix the Bureau of Prisons and follow through on the promise of the First Step Act by building new halfway houses. The Bureau has suffered from years of mismanagement, lack of funding, and low morale. Federal corrections officers serve in challenging conditions on minimal pay and need more support. Our prison system can and will do better.

President Trump's leadership on criminal justice reform demonstrates what is possible when a President is unafraid to do things that have been deemed "too difficult" and to reach across the aisle to bring about real solutions. Like the President, I believe we are on the "cusp of a New Golden age" where the Department of Justice can and will do better.

Lastly, and most importantly, if confirmed, I will work to restore confidence and integrity to the Department of Justice – and each of its components. Under my watch, the partisan weaponization of the Department of Justice will end. America must have one tier of justice for all.

In all this work, I would collaborate closely with this Committee and others in Congress, my colleagues throughout the federal government, and our partners in state and local law enforcement and around the world. I look forward to answering your questions today and working together in the years ahead.

UNITED STATES SENATE  
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY  
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR NON-JUDICIAL NOMINEES

**PUBLIC**

1. **Name:** State full name (include any former names used).

Pamela Jo Bondi

2. **Position:** State the position for which you have been nominated.

Attorney General of the United States

3. **Address:** List current office address. If city and state of residence differs from your place of employment, please list the city and state where you currently reside.

Current Office Address:  
1455 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Suite 225  
Washington DC 20004

Residence: Tampa, Florida

4. **Birthplace:** State date and place of birth.

1965, Tampa, Florida

5. **Education:** List in reverse chronological order each college, law school, or any other institution of higher education attended and indicate for each the dates of attendance, whether a degree was received, and the date each degree was received.

Stetson University College of Law, 1988-1990, J.D. received 1990

St. Edmund Hall College, the University of Oxford, summer 1989 (no degree conferred)

University of Florida, 1986-1987, B.A. received 1987

University of South Florida, 1983-1986

6. **Employment Record:** List in reverse chronological order all governmental agencies, business or professional corporations, companies, firms, or other enterprises, partnerships, institutions or organizations, non-profit or otherwise, with which you have been affiliated as an officer, director, partner, proprietor, or employee since graduation from college, whether or not you received payment for your services. Include the name and address of the employer and job title or description.



2021 – Present  
 SOMA Global  
 1646 West Snow Avenue  
 Tampa, Florida 33606  
 Advisory Board Member  
 Paid Position

2021 – Present  
 America First Policy Institute  
 1635 Rogers Road  
 Fort Worth, Texas 76107  
 Chair, Center for Litigation  
 Chair, AFPI-Florida  
 Co-Chair, Center for Law and Justice  
 Paid Position

2021 – Present  
 Panza, Mauer, & Maynard  
 2400 East Commercial Boulevard, No. 905,  
 Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33308  
 Of Counsel  
 Paid Position

2021 – 2023 (active involvement ceased in 2022)  
 Make America Great Again Action, Inc.  
 138 Conant Street, Suite 401  
 Beverly, Massachusetts 01915  
 Board Member  
 Unpaid

2021 – 2023  
 Make America Great Again Policies, Inc.  
 138 Conant Street, Suite 401  
 Beverly, Massachusetts 01915  
 Board Member  
 Paid Position (2021 – 2022)  
 Unpaid (2023)

2021 – 2022  
 CGI Merchant Group  
 3480 Main Highway, 2nd Floor  
 Miami, Florida 33133  
 Consultant

2021 – 2022

Make America Great Again, Again! Inc.  
138 Conant Street, Suite 401  
Beverly, Massachusetts 01915  
Board Member  
Paid Position

2020 – Present

January 2019 – November 2019  
Ballard Partners  
601 13th St, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
Partner  
Paid Position

November 2019 – March 2020

The White House  
Office of White House Counsel  
Special Advisor to President Trump  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500  
Paid Position

2011 – 2019

Office of the Attorney General  
State of Florida  
PL-01, The Capitol  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1050  
Attorney General  
Paid Position

2009 – 2010

Republican Candidate for Attorney General  
State of Florida  
Not Paid

1991 – 2009

Office of the State Attorney for the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit  
419 North Pierce Street  
Tampa, Florida 33602  
Assistant State Attorney  
Paid Position

1990

Office of the State Attorney for the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit  
419 North Pierce Street

Tampa, Florida 33602  
Intern  
Unpaid Position

1989 – 1990  
Lazarra, Caskey, and Paul, P.A.  
Firm no longer extant  
Law clerk  
Paid Position

7. **Military Service and Draft Status:** Identify any service in the U.S. Military, including dates of service, branch of service, rank or rate, serial number (if different from social security number) and type of discharge received, and whether you have registered for selective service.

I have not served in the U.S. Military. I was not required to register for selective service.

8. **Honors and Awards:** List any scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, academic or professional honors, honorary society memberships, military awards, and any other special recognition for outstanding service or achievement.

*Awards*

Stetson University College of Law's Ben C. Willard Award for Humanitarian Achievement (2019)

Florida Prosecuting Attorneys Association Furtherance of Justice Award (2018)

Drug Free America Lifetime Achievement Award (2018)

Gold Shield Foundation Phil McNiff Lifetime of Service Award (2017)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Award for Excellence in Fighting Fraud, Waste, and Abuse (2017)

Florida Sheriffs Association Friend of the Sheriff Award (2017)

Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida Distinguished Alumni Award (2017)

Selah Freedom Champion Defender Award for Fighting Sex Trafficking (2016)

Statesman of the Year – Republican Party of Palm Beach County (2015)

Florida Board of Medicine Chairman's Recognition Award (2015)

Bay Area Chiefs of Police Public Officer of the Year (2015)

The Humane Society's Humane Law Enforcement Award (2015)

Award from Florida Network of Youth and Family Services (2015)

Florida Prosecuting Attorneys Association Furtherance of Justice Award (2014)

Hillsborough County Medical Association Frederick A. Reddy, M.D., Memorial Award (2014)

Monique Burr Foundation Champion of Child Safety Award (2014)

Florida Bar Board of Governors President's Award of Merit (2013)

Miami Dade County League of Cities "Crime Fighters" Award (2013)

Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida Champion of Independent Education in Florida (2013)

Taxpayer Advocate of the Year (2013)

President's Award from the Florida Prosecuting Attorneys Association (2013)

Valrico-Fishhawk Chamber of Commerce Honorary Membership Award (2013)

National Association of Attorneys General President's Award (2012)

Florida Board of Medicine Chairman's Recognition Award (2012)

Delta Delta Delta Women of Achievement (2012)

Bealls Public Servant of the Year (2012)

Stetson University College of Law Distinguished Alumna Award (2011)

National Association of Drug Diversion Investigators Leadership Award (2011)

Independent Colleges & Universities of Florida's Distinguished Alumni Award (2011)

Lawyers of Distinction Award from the Tampa Bay Review (2011)

Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce Leadership Award (2011)

National Association of Attorneys General Presidential Award (2011)

*Honors*

Inducted into Florida Chamber of Commerce's Women's Hall of Fame (2018)

Tampa FBI Women's History Month (2016)

Florida Council on the Social Status of Black Men & Boys Recognition for Commitment and Dedication (2015)

National Honorary Chair (2015)

University of Florida Blue Key Honor Society Honorary Member (2013)

Katherine Fernandez-Rundle "Crime Fighters" Award (2013)

University of Florida Levin College of Law: Honorary Law (2013)

Stetson University College of Law Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws (2013)

Florida Police Chiefs Association Recognition for Reducing Prescription Drug Abuse (2012)

Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida Champion of Independent Education in Florida Award (2013)

Honorary Deputy, Pecos County, Texas (1998)

9. **Bar Associations:** List all bar associations or legal or judicial-related committees, selection panels or conferences of which you are or have been a member, and give the titles and dates of any offices which you have held in such groups.

Hillsborough County Bar Association, 1991 – approximately 2009

Herbert Goldberg Inn of Court, approximately 1995 – approximately 2009

Florida Bar, 1991 – Present

I served as Vice-Chair of the Grievance Committee in the late-1990s. I do not have records for my exact dates of service.

I served as a member of the DUI Manslaughter Committee. I do not have records for my exact dates of service.

Republican Attorneys General Association, 2011 – 2019

Executive Committee Chair, 2014 – 2015

National Association of Attorneys General, 2011 – 2019

Co-Chair, Substance Abuse Committee, 2012 –2018

Co-Chair, Criminal Law Committee, 2013 –2016

Member, Financial Services and Consumer Protection Enforcement, Education, and Training Committee, 2012 – 2013

Southern Region Chair, Executive Committee, 2011 – 2012  
 Presidential Appointee, Executive Committee, 2013 – 2014; 2015 – 2016

Conference of Western Attorneys General (now the Attorney General Alliance), approximately 2011 – 2018.

10. **Bar and Court Admission:**

a. List the date(s) you were admitted to the bar of any state and any lapses in membership. Please explain the reason for any lapse in membership.

Florida, 1991

b. List all courts in which you have been admitted to practice, including dates of admission and any lapses in membership. Please explain the reason for any lapse in membership. Give the same information for administrative bodies that require special admission to practice.

Supreme Court of Florida, 1991  
 U.S. Supreme Court, 2012

11. **Memberships:**

a. List all professional, business, fraternal, scholarly, civic, charitable, or other organizations, other than those listed in response to Questions 9 or 10 to which you belong, or to which you have belonged, since graduation from law school. Provide dates of membership or participation, and indicate any office you held. Include clubs, working groups, advisory or editorial boards, panels, committees, conferences, or publications.

Junior League of Tampa (1994 (approximate) – 2018)  
 Member, Public Affairs Committee (1996 – 2002)  
 Member, Public Relations Committee (2002 – 2007)

University of Florida Gators Club (1992 (approximate) – 1995)

Special Olympics Florida (2010 – 2018)  
 Member, Board of Directors (2010 – 2018)

Board member, The Spring of Tampa Bay (2010 – 2013)

University of Florida Alumni Board (2012 – 2014; 2015 – 2016)

Stovall House (2019 – Present)

The Kennedy Center (2020 – Present)  
 Board of Trustees (2020 – Present)

b. Indicate whether any of these organizations listed in response to 11.a above currently discriminate or formerly discriminated on the basis of race, sex, religion or national origin either through formal membership requirements or the practical implementation of membership policies. If so, describe any action you have taken to change these policies and practices.

While membership in the Junior League of Tampa (as in other chapters) is historically limited to women I do not believe this limitation can fairly be described as invidious discrimination for which a change in policy or practices is necessary.

All others organizations listed above do not currently discriminate and, insofar as I am aware, did not formerly (during my membership or prior) discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion or national origin either through formal membership requirements or the practical implementation of membership policies.

12. **Published Writings and Public Statements:**

a. List the titles, publishers, and dates of books, articles, reports, letters to the editor, editorial pieces, or other published material you have written or edited, including material published only on the Internet. Supply four (4) copies of all published material to the Committee.

*See Appendix 12.a.*

b. Supply four (4) copies of any reports, memoranda or policy statements you prepared or contributed in the preparation of on behalf of any bar association, committee, conference, or organization of which you were or are a member. If you do not have a copy of a report, memorandum or policy statement, give the name and address of the organization that issued it, the date of the document, and a summary of its subject matter.

None.

c. Supply four (4) copies of any testimony, official statements or other communications relating, in whole or in part, to matters of public policy or legal interpretation, that you have issued or provided or that others presented on your behalf to public bodies or public officials.

*See Appendix 12.a.*

d. Supply four (4) copies, transcripts or recordings of all speeches or talks delivered by you, including commencement speeches, remarks, lectures, panel discussions, conferences, political speeches, and question-and-answer sessions. Include the date and place where they were delivered, and readily available press reports about the speech or talk. If you do not have a copy of the speech or a transcript or recording of your remarks, give the name and address of the group before whom the speech was given, the date of

the speech, and a summary of its subject matter. If you did not speak from a prepared text, furnish a copy of any outline or notes from which you spoke.

*See Appendix 12.d.*

e. List all interviews you have given to newspapers, magazines or other publications, or radio or television stations, providing the dates of these interviews and four (4) copies of the clips or transcripts of these interviews where they are available to you.

*See Appendix 12.e.*

f. If applicable, list all published judicial opinions that you have written, including concurrences and dissents. Supply the citations for all published judicial opinions to the Committee.

I have not served as a judge.

13. **Public Office, Political Activities and Affiliations:**

a. List chronologically any public offices you have held, other than judicial offices, including the terms of service and whether such positions were elected or appointed. If appointed, please include the name of the individual who appointed you. Also, state chronologically any unsuccessful candidacies you have had for elective office or unsuccessful nominations for appointed office.

From 1991 to 2009, I served as an Assistant State Attorney for the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit. I was appointed to this position by Bill James, the State Attorney for the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit.

From 2011 to 2019, I served two terms as the elected Attorney General for the State of Florida.

From November 2019 to March 2020, I served as Special Advisor to the President of the United States. I was appointed to this position by President Donald Trump.

b. List all memberships and offices held in and services rendered, whether compensated or not, to any political party or election committee. If you have ever held a position or played a role in a political campaign, identify the particulars of the campaign, including the candidate, dates of the campaign, your title and responsibilities.

Beginning with my own election campaign in 2010 for Florida Attorney General I have played various roles in local, state, and federal elections. I have, as set forth in response to Question 12.d. above, served as a surrogate on behalf of presidential candidates Mitt Romney, Jeb Bush, and Donald Trump. As set forth in greater detail below, I have also issued endorsements of candidates and have spoken in support of



candidates for other offices during my own election campaigns.

Additionally, and consistent with many elected officials, I have assisted other candidates with fundraising by serving as a member, often in an honorary role, of fundraising committees or otherwise lent my name to support fundraising appeals. I do not have a list of the candidates in which I served in this capacity.

Based on my personal recollection and through a search of publicly available databases, I have listed below campaigns, other than my own, for which I have provided services.

Mitt Romney (candidate for President – 2012)  
 Jeb Bush (candidate for President – 2016, candidate for Governor)  
 Donald Trump (candidate for President – 2016, 2020, 2024)  
 Bill James (Hillsborough County State Attorney)  
 Harry Lee Coe (Hillsborough County State Attorney)  
 Mark Ober (Hillsborough County State Attorney)  
 Susie Lopez (Hillsborough County State Attorney)  
 Cal Henderson (Hillsborough County Sheriff)  
 David Gee (Hillsborough County Sheriff)  
 Chad Cronister (Hillsborough County Sheriff)  
 Lisa McClean (Hillsborough County Public Defender)  
 Laurel Lee (member of Congress)  
 Ashley Moody (Florida Attorney General)  
 Sam Brown (Candidate for U.S. Senate)  
 Dave McCormick (Senator-elect)  
 Emoree Gainey (Alachua County Sheriff)  
 Rick Scott (Governor and U.S. Senator)  
 Marco Rubio (U.S. Senator)  
 Charlie Crist (Candidate for Governor)  
 Ron DeSantis (Candidate for Governor)  
 Doug Belden (Hillsborough County tax collector)  
 Nancy Milan (Hillsborough County tax collector)  
 Adam Putnam (Candidate for Governor)

In addition to this list, I have endorsed many candidates for positions as judges, clerks, and other offices in Hillsborough County. I have also supported candidates for numerous state and local races across the state of Florida. Finally, at the federal level I have supported Republican candidates for the U.S. Senate, U.S. House of Representatives, and Attorneys General.

I have served in a leadership capacity in the following committees:

Justice for All, PAC  
 Make America Great Again Action, Inc  
 Make America Great Again, Again Inc

MAGA Again Policies, Inc.

14. **Legal Career:** Answer each part separately.

a. Describe chronologically your law practice and legal experience after graduation from law school including:

i. whether you served as clerk to a judge, and if so, the name of the judge, the court and the dates of the period you were a clerk;

I have not served as a law clerk.

ii. whether you practiced alone, and if so, the addresses and dates;

I have not practiced alone.

iii. the dates, names and addresses of law firms or offices, companies or governmental agencies with which you have been affiliated, and the nature of your affiliation with each.

1991 – 2009

Office of the State Attorney for the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit  
419 N. Pierce Street  
Tampa, Florida 33602  
Assistant State Attorney

2011 – 2019

Office of the Attorney General  
State of Florida  
PL-01, The Capitol  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1050  
Attorney General

November 2019 – March 2020

The White House  
Office of White House Counsel  
Special Advisor to President Trump  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

2021 – Present

Panza, Mauer, & Maynard  
2400 East Commercial Boulevard, No. 905,  
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33308  
Of Counsel

2021 – Present  
 America First Policy Institute  
 1635 Rogers Rd  
 Fort Worth, Texas 76107  
 Chair, Center for Litigation  
 Co-Chair, Center for Law and Justice

iv. Whether you served as a mediator or arbitrator in alternative dispute resolution proceedings and, if so, a description of the 10 most significant matters with which you were involved in that capacity.

I have not served as a mediator or arbitrator in alternative dispute resolution proceedings.

v. Whether you have held any judicial office, including positions as an administrative law judge, on any U.S. federal, state, tribal, or local court and if so, please provide the name of the court, the jurisdiction of that court, whether the position was appointed or elected, and the dates of your service.

I have not held judicial office.

b. Describe:

i. the general character of your law practice and indicate by date when its character has changed over the years.

From 1991 to 2009, I served as Assistant State Attorney for the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit of the State of Florida. In that capacity I prosecuted criminal violations of state law that occurred in the Circuit, which encompasses all of Hillsborough County, including the incorporated cities of Tampa, Temple Terrace, and Plant City.

From 2011 to 2019, I served Attorney General for the State of Florida. In that role I served as the chief legal officer for the State of Florida and as a member of the Florida Cabinet. I carried out responsibilities set forth by the Florida Constitution and by statute.

From 2019 to 2020, I served as a Special Advisor to President Donald Trump in connection with his impeachment trial in the United States Senate.

From 2021 to present, I have served as of counsel at Panza, Maurer & Maynard where I handle litigation, corporate and regulatory issues.

From 2021 to present, I have served as Chair of the Center for Litigation, Chair of AFPI Florida, and Co-Chair of the Center for Law and Justice of the America First Policy Institute.

- ii. Your typical clients and the areas at each period of your legal career, if any, in which you have specialized.

As Assistant State Attorney and Attorney General for Florida, my client was the State of Florida.

In private practice my clients have been a variety of individuals and corporate clients with respect to criminal and civil matters.

- c. Describe the percentage of your practice that has been in litigation and whether you appeared in court frequently, occasionally, or not at all. If the frequency of your appearances in court varied, describe such variance, providing dates.

As Assistant State Attorney, all of my practice was in litigation and I appeared in court regularly and often daily.

As Florida Attorney General, I oversaw several departments that focused on criminal and civil litigation. I exercised management responsibility for civil and criminal litigation in which the State, and in certain circumstances its agencies, was a party but I did not personally litigate matters and I did not appear in court.

At Panza, Mauer, & Maynard, I represent corporate clients in civil litigation matters. I have not appeared in court.

As Special Counsel to the President, I served as a member of the President's impeachment team and presented portions of the President's defense in the United States Senate.

As Chair of the Center for Litigation and Co-Chair of the Center for Law and Justice of the America First Policy Institute, I have, among other things, overseen the preparation of litigation in which the Institute participated as a party, represented clients, or as an amicus. I have not, however, appeared in court on behalf of the Institute.

- i. Indicate the percentage of your practice in:

1. federal courts: less than 5%
2. state courts of record: greater than 95%
3. other courts: less than 1%
4. administrative agencies: less than 1%

- ii. Indicate the percentage of your practice in:

1. civil proceedings: less than 5%
2. criminal proceedings: greater than 95%

d. State the number of cases in courts of record, including cases before administrative law judges, you tried to verdict, judgment or final decision (rather than settled), indicating whether you were sole counsel, chief counsel, or associate counsel.

During my service as an Assistant State Attorney, I appeared in court on an almost daily basis. I do not have records from which I could derive an exact number but I would estimate I tried to verdict hundreds of criminal cases and at least 1,000 non-jury trials. I handled the disposition of thousands of cases. I did so as sole counsel, lead counsel, and co-counsel.

Of the thousands of trials, hundreds were jury trials and the remaining are non-jury trials.

I also appeared as counsel in a small number of civil matters, I would estimate fewer than five civil matters.

I have not tried cases in any other capacity.

e. Describe your practice, if any, before the Supreme Court of the United States. Supply four (4) copies of any briefs, amicus or otherwise, and, if applicable, any oral argument transcripts before the Supreme Court in connection with your practice.

Brief for Three Former Senior Military Officers and Executive Branch Officials as Amici Curiae Supporting Petitioner, *Trump v. United States*, No. 23-939, 2024 WL 1256194. Copy supplied.

Brief of America First Policy Institute as Amicus Curiae in Support of Petitioners, *Ohio Adjutant General's Dept. v. Fed. Labor Relations Auth.*, No. 21-1454, 2022 WL 17077525. Copy supplied.

Brief for the America First Policy Institute as Amicus Curiae in Support of Petitioner, *Kennedy v. Bremerton Sch. Dist.*, No. 21-418, 2022 WL 685814.

I have not participated in oral argument before the Court.

15. **Litigation:** Describe the ten (10) most significant litigated matters which you personally handled, whether or not you were the attorney of record. Give the citations, if the cases were reported, and the docket number and date if unreported. Give a capsule summary of the substance of each case. Identify the party or parties whom you represented; describe in detail the nature of your participation in the litigation and the final disposition of the case. Also state as to each case:

a. the date of representation;

b. the name of the court and the name of the judge or judges before whom the case was litigated; and

c. the individual name, addresses, and telephone numbers of co-counsel and of principal counsel for each of the other parties.

1. *State of Florida v. Adam Davis and Valessa Robinson*, Hillsborough Cnty. No. 98-CF-11873 (Holloway, J.).

I prosecuted Valessa Robinson and Adam Davis for the murder of Robinson's mother. Valessa was a 15-year-old who had a history of running away and was proving rebellious and difficult for her single mother, Vickie Robinson. She began dating Adam Davis, five years her senior, who her mother did not approve. During the course of this nine-month relationship, Robinson and Davis decided to kill her mother. Late one evening they, along with an accomplice, planned to inject her mother with enough heroin to kill her. When the three were unable to procure the heroin, they obtained a syringe and planned to inject her with bleach and an air bubble to kill her. Davis ultimately grabbed Vickie assisted by Valessa who held her mother down while David retrieved the syringe. Davis injected her with the bleach. As they realized the bleach was not killing Vickie, Davis used a knife to stab Vickie to death. Ultimately, the trio concealed the body in a garbage can in a wooded area. The three took her car and credit cards and used them to spend several days getting tattoos and renting hotel rooms. Police later arrested the trio in Texas. Davis was convicted by a jury of first-degree murder, grand theft, and grand theft of an automobile. After his conviction, a jury voted to recommend the death penalty and the Court agreed. Davis' conviction was upheld on direct appeal to the Florida Supreme Court, 859 So.2d 465 (Fla. 2003). His sentence was later reduced to life imprisonment. Robinson was also convicted and sentenced to 30 years' imprisonment.

#### Co-Counsel

Shirley Williams  
Retired

#### Defense Counsel

Rick Terrana  
Morgan & Morgan  
201 N Franklin Street, Suite 700  
Tampa, Florida 33602-5138  
(813) 559-4916

Charles Traina  
Retired

2. *State of Florida v. Lolita Barthel*, Hillsborough Cnty. No. 95-CF-11398 (Padgett, J.).

Lolita Barthel and her co-defendants were driving around the City of Temple Terrace, Florida when they came upon Richard Menendez, the victim, unloading his car after a business trip. Barthel ordered the car to stop and approached Mr. Menendez. She and her co-defendants

took Mr. Menendez inside his home and began to search for valuables to steal. During this time Ms. Barthel held Mr. Menendez at gunpoint as he laid on the floor and eventually shot and killed him at point blank range. The group fled with several items including Mr. Menendez's credit cards which they used at a local mall. Barthel was convicted by a jury of first-degree murder, burglary of a conveyance, organized fraud, burglary of a dwelling, battery with a deadly weapon, and robbery with a firearm. She was sentenced to life in prison. Her conviction was affirmed on appeal, 711 So.2d 533 (Fla. 2d Dist. App. 1998).

Co-Counsel

Nick Cox  
Office of Statewide Prosecution  
Office of the Attorney General  
3507 East Frontage Road, Suite 325  
Tampa, Florida 33607-1795  
(813) 287-7960

Counsel for the Defendant

Robert Fraser  
Office of the Public Defender  
4604 South Lamar Boulevard  
Austin, Texas 78745-1355  
(813) 205-3469

Charles Traina  
Retired

3. *State of Florida v. Javon Saffold*, Hillsborough Cnty. No. 94-CF-14014 (Fleischer, J.).

Saffold was a 14-year-old with a significant criminal history. He and his co-defendants were driving in the Tampa area searching for cars to steal. While at a local mall, they spotted a van that belonged to a state social worker who was in the mall securing a job for a foster child he oversaw. As they stole the van, the victim saw them and ran outside in an attempt to stop the van. The van (with Saffold driving) pulled onto the roadway and began to flee. The victim ran to the side of the roadway and stood there waving his arms trying to get them to stop. Saffold steered the vehicle into the path of the victim, striking and killing him. Saffold sped away from the scene but was later apprehended. Saffold was convicted at a jury trial of First-Degree Felony Murder and sentenced to life in prison. The conviction was affirmed on appeal, 681 So.2d 285 (Fla. 2d Dist. App. 1996). This case was, among others, important in bringing about legislative action to begin to address significant weaknesses in the juvenile justice system.

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4. *State of Florida v. Jimmy Walker*, Hillsborough Cnty. No. 94-CF-1450 (Fleischer, J.).

Jimmy Walker and a small crew of associates traveled to an area of Hillsborough County, east of downtown Tampa, looking for businesses to burglarize or rob. Having already committed well in excess of a dozen armed robberies, they came upon a small family-owned grocery. This small grocery was in the middle of a family neighborhood and was owned by a Vietnamese gentleman, Mr. Nguyen, and his family who came to the United States after the fall of Saigon. Walker and his associates entered the business intending to rob the store. Mr. Nguyen became suspicious as they milled about. When Walker pulled out his gun, Mr. Nguyen also reached for a firearm he kept for protection. A gunfight ensued and Mr. Nguyen was struck in the leg. As the robbers fled the store, Walker stopped behind the injured, and now unarmed, Mr. Nguyen and shot him in the head. After a jury trial Walker was convicted and sentenced to life in prison. I also prosecuted a number of the armed robberies Walker committed prior to committing this murder.

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5. *State of Florida v. Matthew Durrell*, Hillsborough Cnty. No. 95-CF-11065 (Fleischer, J.)

When he was 18, Matthew Durrell went out one evening to a party with three of his friends. At the party Durrell drank liquor and smoked marijuana. After leaving the party he drove into a tree, killing all three of his passengers. After the arrest, Durrell secured bail pending trial. I learned that Durrell was, despite the conditions of his bail, still consuming alcohol at parties. I located a video from the local public access channel that showed Durrell at a party drinking alcohol and in a highly intoxicated state. I moved to revoke his bond. Durrell eventually entered a plea of guilty and was sentenced to 20 years in prison.

After he was released from prison, Durrell reached out to me. We discussed his rehabilitation during his time in prison and after his release. Together, Durrell and I prepared and hosted a series of presentations to students at high schools about the dangers of underage drinking and impaired driving. I continue to keep in touch with Durrell to this day. He is a successful business owner with a beautiful daughter.

#### Counsel for the Defendant

Russell Peaveyhouse  
 Deceased.

6. *State of Florida v. Richard Margarejo*, Hillsborough Cnty. Case No. 97-CF-1329 (Fleischer, J.)

Richard Margarejo's family had a history of being local leaders of a large national gang. He and some other gang members decided to commit a "drug rip off" of a local hydro-marijuana grower and dealer. They went to his home, forced their way in with firearms and began to rob the victim. As the robbery took place, Margarejo ordered the victim's hand and feet bound with duct tape. The victim was left on the floor face down with his hands bound behind his back. The victim was found almost a week later dead in the same position.

During the trial a witness was threatened and beaten. My co-counsel and I were also threatened during recesses in the hallway by a person wearing gang colors and suspicious calls were placed to our office beepers. There were also reports of gang members driving by our homes. As a result, we were both assigned security details and given permission to carry a firearm at all times including in the courtrooms. Margarejo was ultimately convicted of First-Degree Murder and sentenced to life in prison. His conviction was affirmed on appeal, 743 So. 2d 1089 (Fla. 2d Dist. App. 1999).

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7. *State of Florida v. Henry Dickens*, Bay County No. 06-4016 CFM (Overstreet, J.)

This case was a special prosecutorial executive assignment by Governor Jeb Bush in Panama City, Florida. Martin Lee Anderson was a 14-year-old boy who was incarcerated at a boot camp for youthful offenders operated by the local sheriff. During his first day at the camp, Anderson was subjected to exercises that he ultimately could not perform. The guards at the camp forced him to continue the exercises by applying force. They held him up by his arms, utilized forced take downs and pressure point applications. During this attack, Anderson became unresponsive and the guards used ammonia salts to try and revive him. He did not respond and was placed on life support until the next day when his parents ordered him to be removed from life, and he died. Ultimately the seven guards and a nurse who was present at the scene were charged with Aggravated Manslaughter.

A “battle of experts” ensued between medical examiners. Some claimed the child died from complications related to sickle cell anemia, and others opined that the child died from the applied force, but primarily from the use of ammonia that caused the child to asphyxiate. Several physicians were called to testify with differing opinions and provided differing findings. With such conflict among the experts as to the cause of death, the jury found the defendants not guilty. The effects of the case, however, continued to be felt even after the verdict, given the strong emotions stirred and calls for change that ensued.

The case drew significant attention from advocates for children and civil rights leaders in state and national media. A Florida Department of Law Enforcement Commissioner, who was the former sheriff of the county, resigned under pressure, and a medical examiner was fired. Ultimately the Department of Juvenile Justice ordered youth detention facilities to cease the use of force and five juvenile boot camps in Florida were closed. This case led to the end of the military style boot camps for children in Florida.

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8. *State of Florida v. William K. Taylor*, Hillsborough Cnty. No. 01-CF-8692 (Fleischer, J.)

William Taylor met the victim, Sandra Kushmer, and her brother at a bar. He had previously known the victim from school. At the bar, Taylor noticed that Ms. Kushmer's brother was spending money on expensive drinks and left large tips, so he decided to rob them. After the group went to the victim's mother's house, Taylor attacked them. He struck Ms. Kushmer in the head with his shotgun and then shot and killed her. He also nearly beat her brother to death, leaving him with brain damage. Ultimately captured in Tennessee, he was brought back to Florida to face charges of Murder in the First Degree, Attempted Murder in the First Degree, Robbery and Armed Burglary. He was convicted by a jury on all counts.

Taylor had committed prior crimes of violence in Delaware and had also assaulted and burglarized a woman he worked with in Nevada. Following his conviction, the jury heard evidence of his prior crimes in the penalty phase and unanimously recommended a sentence of death. The Court then sentenced him to death.

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Retired

9. *State of Florida v. Melvin D. Givens*, Hillsborough Cnty. No. 01-CF-10621 (Fuente, J.)

The victim, Danielle Cipriani, was a news director for the local NBC affiliate in Tampa, Florida. Her colleagues from her station found her in her home, where she lived alone, after she failed to appear at work. She had been stabbed dozens of times. Melvin Givens confessed to killing the victim, but the defense argued his diagnoses as a paranoid schizophrenic, his years of drug abuse, the fact he was off his medication at the time, and that he heard imaginary voices negated the required criminal intent. However, my co-counsel and I presented evidence demonstrating the steps he took both before and after the murder to plan and cover up the evidence, suggesting his ability to determine right from wrong. A jury convicted Givens of First-Degree Murder and Armed Burglary. He was sentenced to two consecutive life sentences.

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10. *State of Florida v. Christopher Burton*, Hillsborough Cnty. No. 94-CF-010478 (Padgett, J.)

In 1994 and 1995, I tried Christopher Burton for the murder of 17-year-old Jerome Berry. The murder was over a gold chain. Burton shot Berry after robbing him of the jewelry. It took a jury less than an hour to find Burton guilty of first-degree murder and armed robbery. Burton was sentenced to life in prison. This was not Burton's first robbery or shooting. Weeks before he killed Berry, Burton had attempted to rob and also shot another man. I also prosecuted that case. Burton was found guilty of aggravated battery and attempted robbery.

Co-Counsel

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Counsel for the Defendant

Michael Connell  
 Address unknown

16. **Legal Activities:** Describe the most significant legal activities you have pursued including significant litigation which did not progress to trial or legal matters that did not involve litigation. Describe fully the nature of your participation in these activities. List any client(s) or organization(s) for whom you performed lobbying activities and describe the lobbying activities you performed on behalf of such client(s) or organizations(s). (Note: As to any facts requested in this question, please omit any information protected by the attorney-client privilege.)

*Domestic Violence Prosecutions*

As a misdemeanor Assistant State Attorney, I spent many months prosecuting domestic violence cases. Although many cases went to trial, many others did not because victims were unable to break the cycle of domestic violence and would often recant or decline to cooperate. These victims would often return to their abuser and suffer more and sometimes greater abuse. This was a formative experience in my career as a prosecutor and helped me understand the need for greater assistance and counseling to victims.

*Service as the Florida Attorney General*

For eight years I had the privilege of serving as the Attorney General of Florida. During that time, I served as Chief Legal Officer for the State and oversaw an office consisting of more than 1,200 employees including attorneys and support staff. I also worked closely with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. The accomplishments listed below are due in large part to the hard work and dedication of these attorneys, law enforcement officers, and support staff and personnel I was honored to work with.

**Fighting drug abuse in Florida and nationwide.**

On entering office, I promised to make fighting the scourge of drug addiction and abuse—particularly from prescription drugs—a top priority. My office filed comprehensive litigation against some of the nation's largest opioid manufacturers and distributors in the country for playing a role in the national opioid crisis. I also worked closely with state lawmakers to pass a ban on Fentanyl trafficking. I led efforts calling for state legislation to prevent opioid addiction by limiting initial prescriptions for opioid-based medications and I fought to establish and fund the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program database and to allow interstate PDMP data sharing to help stop doctor shopping nationwide. Prior to the passage of

this legislation, 90 of the top 100 oxycodone purchasing physicians in the nation were located in Florida. After passage, *none* of the top dispensing physicians resided in Florida.

At a national level, I co-authored the national report on combating the national opioid crisis as a member of the President's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis and co-chaired the National Association of Attorneys General Substance Abuse Committee.

During my tenure as Attorney General, I also saw—and acted on—the rise of synthetic drugs including “bath salts,” synthetic marijuana, and other similar products. Using the power of my office to ban products on a short-term basis, I acted to outlaw these products and worked with the Florida legislature to make these bans permanent. I also led public awareness campaigns on the dangers of synthetic drugs particularly for children.

#### **Human Trafficking**

As Attorney General, I pledged to make Florida a zero-tolerance state for human traffickers. I worked to pass comprehensive legislation to combine Florida's existing human trafficking statutes with an increase in penalties against human traffickers. I also founded and chaired the Statewide Council on Human Trafficking to identify counseling and resources for trafficking survivors. I hosted the annual Human Trafficking Summit to bring together stakeholders to share strategies for fighting human trafficking and protect survivors. I launched YouCanStopHT.com to educate the public about how to spot and report human trafficking. Finally, I led the statewide awareness campaign From Instant Message to Instant Nightmare to educate parents about protecting children from sex traffickers.

#### **Rape Kit Testing**

In 2015, a survey conducted by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement determined that more than 13,000 sexual assault kits held by various law enforcement offices across the State had not been tested. As Attorney General I helped lead the campaign to secure funding from the State to eliminate this backlog. I also worked with federal and other partners to secure grants from other sources to supplement state funding. In 2019, it was announced the backlog had been eliminated and hopefully provided peace and justice to many rape victims.

#### **The National Mortgage Settlement**

In February 2012, 49 states, the District of Columbia, and the federal government entered into the National Mortgage Settlement with the five largest mortgage servicers. At its core, the settlement relates to inappropriate practices by the services in foreclosure and bankruptcy proceedings.

This settlement was the largest consumer financial protection settlement in U.S. history and included the payment of approximately \$50 billion by the servicers including relief to homeowners and payments to the settling parties. Florida's share of the settlement was approximately \$8 billion, including assistance and relief for troubled Florida homeowners,

payments to Florida borrowers who already lost their homes, and payment to the State to help fund housing-related and foreclosure prevention programs within the state and provide for civil penalties. As Attorney General for a state with a large number of affected homeowners, I took a leading role in negotiating the settlement and securing favorable terms for the state and federal parties.

#### *Lobbying Activities*

As a partner at Ballard Partners, I do not engage in the practice of law. I am a registered lobbyist. I was a FARA-registered lobbyist on behalf of the Embassy of the State of Qatar in 2019 and again (after returning to Ballard) in 2020. I have also provided lobbying services on behalf of Major County Sheriffs of America Alden Torch Financial, LLC, American Kitchen Cabinet Alliance, Balsam Brands, Inc., Bankers Financial Corporation, Carnival North America LLC, Fidelity National Financial, Inc., Florida Sheriffs Association, Florida Sheriffs Risk Management Fund, General Motors LLC, KGL Investment Company KSCC, Lender's Consulting Group, LLC, Major League Baseball, NES Health, Pulte Capital Partners, LLC, U.S. Institute Against Human Trafficking, IGT Global Solutions, Pulaski Law Firm, PLLC, Uber Technologies, Inc., Amazon.com, American Road & Transportation Builders Association, Anderson Kill P.C., Kreindler & Kreindler LLP, Children's Hospital Association, Detroit International Bridge Company, Inc., Republic Services Procurement, Inc., The Geo Group, Inc., Varian Medical Systems, and Lathrop Gage LLP.

17. **Teaching:** What courses have you taught? For each course, state the title, the institution at which you taught the course, the years in which you taught the course, and describe briefly the subject matter of the course and the major topics taught. If you have a syllabus of each course, provide four (4) copies to the committee.

I have not taught any courses.

18. **Deferred Income/ Future Benefits:** List the sources, amounts and dates of all anticipated receipts from deferred income arrangements, stock, options, uncompleted contracts and other future benefits which you expect to derive from previous business relationships, professional services, firm memberships, former employers, clients or customers. Describe the arrangements you have made to be compensated in the future for any financial or business interest.

DJT Stock (ticker: DJT): Approximately 75,000 shares exercisable at market price.

DJT Warrants (ticker: DJTWW): 31,250 warrants exercisable at market price.

State of Florida Retirement Pension Plan (26 years combined service): Estimated as of Dec. 16, 2024 at approximately \$75,000 per year for life.

Consulting fees for professional services rendered to the Ballard Group (due Jan. 2025): \$21,500.

Fees for legal services rendered to Panza, Mauer, & Maynard (due Jan. 2025): \$31,500.

SOMA Global Board of Director fees (due Jan. 2025): \$48,000.

CGI Merchant Group consulting fees (due 2025): \$1,037,000.

Fees for professional services to American First Policy Institute (due Jan. 2025): \$21,000.

19. **Outside Commitments During Service:** Do you have any plans, commitments, or agreements to pursue outside employment, with or without compensation, during your service? If so, explain.

None.

20. **Sources of Income:** List sources and amounts of all income received during the calendar year preceding your nomination and for the current calendar year, including all salaries, fees, dividends, interest, gifts, rents, royalties, licensing fees, honoraria, and other items exceeding \$500 or more (if you prefer to do so, copies of the financial disclosure report, required by the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, may be substituted here).

A copy of the financial disclosure report will be delivered to the Senate Judiciary Committee after my formal nomination.

21. **Statement of Net Worth:** Please complete the attached financial net worth statement in detail (add schedules as called for).

Please see attached Statement of Net Worth.

22. **Potential Conflicts of Interest:**

a. Identify the family members or other persons, parties, affiliations, pending and categories of litigation, financial arrangements or other factors that are likely to present potential conflicts-of-interest when you first assume the position to which you have been nominated. Explain how you would address any such conflict if it were to arise.

As Chair of the Center for Litigation and Co-Chair, Center for Law and Justice of the America First Policy Institute, I have provided legal services on behalf of clients as parties and as amici curiae in cases and other legal matters where the United States, its agencies, and officers are, or were, also parties. Some of these cases and matters are ongoing. In the event I am confirmed, I will consult with the appropriate Department of Justice ethics officials and act consistent with governing regulations with regard to these cases and legal matters.

In addition, my brother, Brad Bondi, is a practicing attorney with Paul Hastings, LLP. I am not aware of any cases that would currently present potential conflicts of interest. However, in the event of a potential conflict of interest, I will consult with the



appropriate Department of Justice ethics officials and act consistent with governing regulations.

b. Explain how you will resolve any potential conflict of interest, including the procedure you will follow in determining these areas of concern.

In the event of a potential conflict of interest, I will consult with the appropriate Department of Justice ethics officials and act consistent with governing regulations.

23. **Pro Bono Work:** An ethical consideration under Canon 2 of the American Bar Association's Code of Professional Responsibility calls for "every lawyer, regardless of professional prominence or professional work load, to find some time to participate in serving the disadvantaged." Describe what you have done to fulfill these responsibilities, listing specific instances and the amount of time devoted to each. If you are not an attorney, please use this opportunity to report significant charitable and volunteer work you may have done.

For much of my career I have been an Assistant State Attorney or Florida Attorney General. In both roles, my availability to engage in pro bono legal work was limited by my representation of the State of Florida and its agencies as a client. While Florida Attorney General I prioritized opportunities for the Office to serve the disadvantaged and the vulnerable including victims of crime and their families and victims of fraudulent or inappropriate business practices. As explained in more depth above in response to Question 16, I prioritized the victims of human trafficking, those suffering from drug addiction including newborns, and those unfairly treated by inaccurate and sloppy practices by the Nation's largest mortgage services.

In addition to legal services, I have also dedicated time to charitable and volunteer work in my community and in the State of Florida. My passion has been assisting animal rescue shelters, including various Humane Societies throughout Florida and Big Dog Ranch Rescue. My efforts focused on assisting shelters' animal rescue initiatives, advocacy, and animal protections. The work of the groups has led to the growth of rescue facilities, allowing higher animal intake, lower kill rates, and better care. The work has also increased the enforcement of animal rights, and the shelter and adoption of thousands of animals. I have also been blessed to use my public position to advocate for animal adoption. I regularly brought dogs in need of adoption to meetings of the Florida Cabinet. I am proud that as a result, more than 70 dogs I brought to Cabinet meetings were successfully placed with new homes.

**Senator Grassley, Chairman**  
**Questions for the Record**  
**The Honorable Pamela Jo Bondi**  
**Nominee to be Attorney General of the United States**  
**January 16, 2025**

1. As you probably know, I've been extremely concerned about increased agribusiness concentration, reduced market opportunities, fewer competitors, and the inability of family farmers and independent producers to obtain fair prices for their products. I've been concerned about the possibility of anti-competitive business practices in the agriculture industry. Moreover, there are a number of significant mergers and acquisitions in the agriculture sector that are currently under Antitrust Division review. Do I have your commitment that the Justice Department will pay close attention to agribusiness competition matters and carefully scrutinize proposed agribusiness mergers and acquisitions, as well as deceptive and unfair practices in the industry? Can you assure me that agriculture antitrust issues will be a priority for the Justice Department if you are confirmed to be U.S. Attorney General?

**RESPONSE:** I look forward to working with the Antitrust Division on these issues and I appreciate and share your interest. Like you, I am concerned that anti-competitive behavior has negative and deleterious effects on small and independent businesses including in agriculture. Regarding mergers and acquisitions currently under review by the Antitrust Division, I believe it would be inappropriate for me to comment on these reviews.

2. I've long supported the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the public disclosure of government records. Transparency yields accountability, no matter who is in the White House. As Chairman of this Committee, I helped steer the FOIA Improvement Act—led by Senators Cornyn and Leahy—into law, which creates a “presumption of openness” standard. The Justice Department oversees the federal government’s compliance with FOIA.

a. Do you agree that FOIA is a critically important tool for holding the government accountable? If confirmed, will you commit to making FOIA—and the faithful and timely implementation of the 2016 amendments—a top priority at the Department?

**RESPONSE:** Yes, I believe FOIA is an important tool for government accountability. Regarding the implementation of the 2016 amendments, I have not previously considered that issue, but I would consult with officials from the Department’s Office of Information Policy to address the amendments’ timely implementation.

b. If confirmed, will you commit to helping advocate for more proactive disclosure of government records—not just by the Justice Department, but by the federal government overall?

**RESPONSE:** I have not previously considered the Department’s current policies and procedures regarding proactive disclosures. If confirmed, I will consult with personnel within the Department regarding its proactive disclosure policies to determine whether changes are appropriate within the Department and across the federal government.

3. The last two Republican-appointed Attorneys General showed an unwavering commitment to seeking justice for vulnerable populations such as the elderly. Both encouraged the prosecution of financial fraud and scams that targeted seniors. They championed training, research, victim services, and public awareness initiatives to combat elder abuse through the Justice Department's "Elder Justice Initiative."

a. Will you also commit to continue the previous administration's Elder Justice Initiative and devote adequate resources to its implementation?

**RESPONSE:** In my time as a state prosecutor and Florida's Attorney General, I prioritized serving the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged victims. If confirmed, I will seek to ensure that the Department effectively implements the programs Congress has charged us with, particularly those protecting victims.

b. And will you ensure that there continues to be a prosecutor dedicated to elder abuse cases in each federal judicial district (as required under the bipartisan Elder Abuse Prevention and Prosecution Act, which I championed in 2017 with Senator Blumenthal)?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department of Justice vigorously enforces the laws that seek to protect vulnerable Americans.

4. The Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit in DOJ's Civil Rights Division works closely with federal prosecutors and law enforcement personnel to streamline human trafficking investigations, ensure consistent enforcement of trafficking statutes, and identify multijurisdictional trafficking networks. The FBI's Crimes Against Children and Human Trafficking program also focuses on detection and investigation of human trafficking crimes. If confirmed, will you ensure that the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking offenses remains a top priority for the Department?

**RESPONSE:** As I stated in my hearing, and as evidenced by my tenure as Florida's Attorney General, fighting human trafficking is an issue to which I bring considerable experience. If I am confirmed, I can assure you that combatting trafficking will be a top priority of the Department of Justice.

5. Under the Obama administration, the Justice Department arranged for settling defendants to donate money to non-victim third-parties, including politically favored groups. This was simply another tool by which the Obama Justice Department would pick winners and losers based on a politically-driven agenda. Payments ordered by settlements with the Department of Justice should only be used to punish the defendant and to make actual victims whole again, not to benefit favored groups. The Obama Justice Department also abused its settlement authority by signing off on settlements and consent decrees with interest groups that committed agencies to fast-track new regulations. This practice, known as sue-and-settle, undermines transparency and accountability in the rulemaking process and offends the intent of Congress. The Biden administration continued this practice. As Attorney General, will you commit to working with Congress and this Committee to ensure that settlements entered into by the Department, and any payments derived from them,

are used appropriately for the punishment of defendants and redress of actual victims? Will you likewise commit to working with Congress and this Committee to end abusive sue-and-settle tactics?

**RESPONSE:** While I am not familiar with the particular policies and guidance currently in place at the Department of Justice regarding this issue, if confirmed, I will work to review all Department policies to ensure that the laws of the United States are faithfully enforced and upheld.

6. As you know, the high cost of prescription drugs is an increasing concern for American consumers. I have introduced legislation that would address deceptive and unfair practices by PBMs, as well as consolidation within the healthcare market that drives up prices. President-Elect Trump agrees and has pledged to “bring down drug prices.” Do you believe that the Antitrust Division at the Justice Department has a role to play with respect to these concerns? Can you assure me that drug competition issues will be a priority for the Justice Department if you are confirmed to be U.S. Attorney General?

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these concerns with you and work with the Antitrust Division to address the needs of Americans regarding pharmaceutical drug pricing.

7. A significant number of girls in the juvenile justice system are actually victims of human trafficking. What efforts will you make to promote the identification of these victims and help ensure their needs are better met?

**RESPONSE:** As Florida’s Attorney General, I saw firsthand the devastating consequences of human trafficking, particularly on young women and girls who were trafficking victims. If confirmed, I assure that combatting human trafficking and serving those who have been victims of human trafficking will be a top priority of the Department of Justice.

8. The Department of Justice, and specifically the Civil Rights Division, is supposed to enforce laws against racial discrimination. Under the Biden administration, however, the Justice Department has actually promoted discrimination and turned a blind eye to discriminatory practices in the name of “diversity, equity, and inclusion.” I’d like a commitment from you that this unacceptable state of affairs will change.

a. Do you agree that race discrimination by employers is illegal, even if the discrimination is disguised as “diversity,” “equity,” or “inclusion”?

**RESPONSE:** Yes. Discrimination based on race is unlawful. If confirmed, I will fully and fairly enforce antidiscrimination and civil rights laws.

b. Will you commit to aggressively enforce civil rights laws, including Title VII, against companies that discriminate on the basis of race—even if the discrimination is labeled “diversity,” “equity,” or “inclusion”?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 8(a) above.

c. Will you commit to aggressively enforce civil rights laws, including Title VI, against programs and organizations (including universities) that receive federal funds but who discriminate on the basis of race—even if the discrimination is labeled “diversity,” “equity,” or “inclusion”?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 8(a) above.

d. Will you commit to aggressively enforce civil rights laws against state and local governments that discriminate on the basis of race—even if the discrimination is labeled “diversity,” “equity,” or “inclusion”?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 8(a) above.

9. The Government Accountability Office reported in April 2024 that an estimated \$233 to \$521 billion in taxpayer dollars was lost to fraud each year between 2018 and 2022.

Last Congress, I wrote to DOJ about their dismissals of False Claims Act whistleblower cases. In some instances, those dismissals occurred after DOJ initially declined to intervene.

It’s important to let whistleblowers pursue cases even when the Department doesn’t. As the GAO has shown, there’s a lot of taxpayer money at stake.

In circumstances where DOJ doesn’t initially intervene in a False Claims Act case, if confirmed, will you commit to ensuring the DOJ doesn’t unnecessarily dismiss cases?

**RESPONSE:** In addressing False Claims Act cases, I will ensure the Department makes dismissal decisions only as appropriate and in accordance with the relevant facts and law.

10. Project Thor was a federal effort led by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) to disrupt and dismantle criminal networks trafficking firearms from the U.S. to Mexico. My oversight has revealed that Project Thor successfully identified and helped prosecute criminal networks directing the purchasing and smuggling of firearms from the U.S. to cartels in Mexico, including the infamous Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG). Project Thor received public and private accolades for its work; however, the Biden Justice Department reportedly defunded the program beginning in 2022. I’ve repeatedly asked the Justice Department and its components to provide a full account of Project Thor’s work and why the Justice Department defunded the operation, but it has failed to provide a sufficient explanation.

If confirmed, will you commit to fully responding to my requests for a complete account of Project Thor’s work and why the Justice Department defunded the operation?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will consult with officials in the Department’s Office of Legislative Affairs and the ATF to ensure the Department responds to your requests, consistent with the Department’s policies and principles.

11. In May 2024, the DOJ Inspector General (OIG) issued a Management Advisory Memorandum reporting that the Justice Department failed to comply with law and Security Executive Agency Directive 9 which requires federal agencies to provide protections for federal employees who allege their security clearance was suspended, revoked, or denied in retaliation for making legally protected whistleblower disclosures.

The DOJ OIG found that the Justice Department's failure to follow the law "creates the risk that the security process could be misused, as part of an inappropriate effort to encourage an employee to resign." According to the DOJ OIG Management Advisory Memorandum, the Justice Department concurred with the OIG's recommendations. On May 9, 2024, I wrote the Justice Department requesting an update on the implementation status. On June 12, 2024, the Justice Department responded that on June 7, 2024, it issued interim guidance to the Department and its components about complying with the law and that DOJ policy is being updated to address the issues identified by the DOJ OIG.

If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that the Justice Department updates its internal policies to address the issues identified in the DOJ OIG Management Advisory Memorandum within a timely manner?

**RESPONSE:** I am not aware of the details surrounding this memorandum, but if confirmed I will consult with appropriate Department personnel about the interim guidance and the status of the policy updates to address the issues identified by the Inspector General.

12. Since 1984, the Crime Victims Fund (CVF) has provided critical resources to support victims and survivors of crime through grants for programs such as domestic violence shelters, victim advocacy centers, victim legal assistance, and children advocacy centers. The CVF is unique because Congress established the fund to be self-sustaining through Justice Department prosecutions of criminals by requiring "all fines that are collected from persons convicted of offenses against the United States" be deposited into the CVF, with very limited exceptions. However, my ongoing oversight revealed the Justice Department has redirected portions of these funds elsewhere or not collected them for the CVF. Since my ongoing oversight has revealed these issues, the Government Accountability Office and the DOJ Inspector General have initiated their own reviews and audits of DOJ's management and administration of the CVF.

If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that the Justice Department deposits all criminal fines and penalties into the CVF as required by law?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will seek to ensure that all Department of Justice programs are administered in accordance with parameters set by Congress. I would welcome any input your office would have on this issue.

13. For over a decade, I've investigated allegations of child trafficking and exploitation, including through the HHS Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) program for placing unaccompanied alien children (UAC) with sponsors. Last year, I referred information on potentially criminal activity and trafficking in the ORR UAC program to FBI and DHS showing children likely placed in harm's way.

If confirmed, do you commit to thoroughly reviewing and investigating these referrals?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will review the referrals you have submitted. In any situation, I am committed that the Department will conduct investigations as appropriate and in accordance with the relevant facts and law.

14. I have a long history conducting oversight of the Justice Department's implementation of the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) including its, at-times, lax and selective enforcement. FARA is an important statute that was designed not to prohibit activity but rather to require individuals to register with the DOJ if they are acting as an agent of a foreign government or enterprise to influence U.S. policy or public opinion. This helps ensure transparency and accountability in the public policy arena. In that sense, FARA is a content-neutral regulatory scheme that would not require any entity or individual to refrain from certain types of speech.

If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that the Justice Department's FARA Unit has the necessary resources and tools to equally and consistently administer and enforce FARA?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will consult with relevant Department personnel about the resources necessary for the Department's FARA Unit to perform its duties.

Which countries would you request for the FARA Unit to focus on as DOJ works to respond to malign foreign actors' increasing efforts to interfere in U.S. public discourse and policymaking?

**RESPONSE:** As a career prosecutor for 18 years and Florida's Attorney General for eight years, I have not had occasion to consider that issue. If confirmed, I will consult with relevant Department personnel about the FARA Unit's operations, and will ensure that any enforcement actions are undertaken in accordance with the relevant facts and law.

15. On July 16, 2024, I wrote to Attorney General Garland and FBI Director Wray about the July 13, 2024, assassination attempt against now President-elect Trump in Butler, Pennsylvania and the subsequent investigation into the incident. DOJ has failed to respond.

If confirmed, will you commit to providing complete responses to my past and future written requests? Will you also commit to providing me with rolling updates and briefings on the status of DOJ and FBI's investigation into the July 13 assassination attempt?

**RESPONSE:** As indicated at my hearing, if confirmed, either I or my top staff will personally review the letters and do everything we can to respond to you.

16. I've made multiple requests to Attorney General Garland and FBI Director Wray to produce records and answers concerning allegations of rampant workplace sexual misconduct occurring within the FBI. Despite multiple public commitments to provide me this information, the FBI—under Director Wray—failed to provide full and complete responses.

If confirmed, will you commit to providing full and complete responses to my requests? Will you also commit to ensuring all allegations of workplace sexual misconduct at the FBI and across DOJ are fully investigated and to hold those employees accountable for engaging in this misconduct?

**RESPONSE:** Either I or my top staff will personally review the letters and do everything we can to respond to you. If confirmed, I will ensure that the workplace sexual misconduct is investigated consistent with the policies and procedures of the Department and in accordance with the relevant facts and law.

17. On October 10, 2024, I wrote to Attorney General Garland and FBI Director Wray concerning, among other things, legally protected whistleblower disclosures alleging that the FBI hasn't sufficiently prioritized investigating exploited and sexually abused children through its Violent Crimes Against Children Program. According to these legally protected disclosures, the politicization of the FBI has threatened these investigations because agents have been reassigned from investigating child exploitation and human trafficking cases to investigating January 6 cases, where there was little work to be done. DOJ and the FBI have failed to provide an adequate response, including producing responsive records.

If confirmed, will you commit to providing a complete response to my letter? Will you also commit to ensuring the FBI's Violent Crimes Against Children program has the necessary resources to investigate child exploitation, sexual abuse, and human trafficking cases?

**RESPONSE:** As I stated during my hearing, I am committed to doing everything the Department can to respond to your letters. If confirmed, I will consult with the relevant Department official regarding the resources necessary for the FBI's Violent Crimes Against Children program to pursue its mission.

18. On August 6, 2020, Senator Johnson and I received a briefing from the FBI which, according to the FBI, was done in conjunction with the Intelligence Community. This briefing was done because of political pressure from Democratic Leadership. The contents of the briefing were later leaked, even though the FBI promised confidentiality. The briefing was used to try and falsely connect our Biden family investigation to Russian disinformation, even though our investigation was based on Obama/Biden administration records. To this day, over four years later, we have not been provided the intelligence basis for the briefing.

If confirmed, will you work with me and Senator Johnson to obtain that information?

**RESPONSE:** As I stated in my hearing, if confirmed I will fight every day to restore confidence and integrity to the Department and its components, including the FBI, and to end weaponization that has previously occurred. I am not familiar with the details of the briefing you've mentioned. However, if confirmed I will discuss the matter further with appropriate officials within the Department of Justice to see what can be done to address your concerns, consistent with the policies and principles of the Department and any applicable laws.

19. The Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) program provides benefits to first responders and their families who are disabled or killed in the line of duty.



At my request, the GAO reported that PSOB officials have failed to make necessary improvements. PSOB isn't sufficiently collecting data or publishing reports as required by law. They're not ensuring claims are processed consistently and in a timely manner. They're not sufficiently keeping applicants updated on the status of their claims and applications.

If confirmed, will you commit to conducting a thorough review of the PSOB program and to hold management accountable for their failures?

**RESPONSE:** I am not familiar with the details of this program, but if confirmed I welcome the opportunity to discuss the matter further with appropriate officials within the Department of Justice.

20. In 1986, the Controlled Substances Act imposed a sentencing disparity between crack and powder cocaine of 100-to-1. In 2010, the Fair Sentencing Act reduced that disparity to 18-to-1, and in 2018, the First Step Act made that revision retroactive. I introduced the SMART Cocaine Sentencing Act, which would reduce the disparity even further to 2.5-to-1. Critically, the SMART Cocaine Sentencing Act also requires a prosecutor review and certification process for any retroactive sentencing adjustments. In January 2022, the United States Sentencing Commission found "Crack cocaine trafficking offenders ... were rearrested at a higher rate (57.8%) than any other drug type." While legislative negotiations were ongoing to correct the disparity, Attorney General Garland issued a December 16, 2022 memorandum instructing prosecutors to treat crack cocaine as if it were powder cocaine when making charging and sentencing decisions. This memorandum hindered congressional negotiations. If confirmed, will you commit to tackling this issue with Congress, instead of instructing prosecutors to disregard existing law?

**RESPONSE:** As I stated in my hearing, I will look into this issue if confirmed as Attorney General. I appreciate your concerns, and I would be happy to meet with you and other members of this Committee to discuss how best to move forward together.

**Senator Dick Durbin**  
**Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee**  
**Written Questions for Pamela Jo Bondi**  
**Nominee to be Attorney General of the United States**  
**January 16, 2025**

1. As recently as June 2024, President-elect Trump suggested that former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton should be jailed. At your 2016 speech at the Republican National Convention, as the crowd chanted “lock her up,” you replied, “‘Lock her up,’ I love that.”

**a. What did you mean by, “‘Lock her up,’ I love that”?**

**RESPONSE:** My comment was an extemporaneous reaction to a crowd at a political convention.

**b. Do you agree with President-elect Trump that Secretary Clinton should be prosecuted?**

**RESPONSE:** I have not had occasion to consider the question.

2. In March 2024, the President-elect mused that Cassidy Hutchinson, a former White House aide who testified before the January 6 Committee, should be prosecuted. In June 2022, you appeared on *Fox News* and publicly questioned whether Ms. Hutchinson had “been promised something for [her] testimony, a job, money?”

**a. Do you agree with President-elect Trump that Cassidy Hutchinson should face criminal investigation or prosecution?**

**RESPONSE:** I have not had the opportunity to consider the question.

**b. Do you have any evidence that Cassidy Hutchinson was promised financial compensation or immunity in exchange for her testimony? If not, why did you say this?**

**RESPONSE:** As your question indicates, I was not making a statement or asserting a declaration for which evidence would be expected, I was asking a question.

3. Fewer than ten percent of First Step Act beneficiaries have been rearrested or returned to custody. This is significantly smaller than the Bureau of Prisons’ overall recidivism rate of about 45 percent.

**a. If confirmed, will you commit to working on a bipartisan basis to build upon the success of the First Step Act—including by helping to hire more First Step Act program instructors and staff?**

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will work with relevant Department components to study the issue of recidivism and explore areas for further program development.

4. In 2017, when then-President Trump attempted to end the DACA program, you stated that the decision “demonstrate[d] respect for the rule of law and compassion for children brought to our country illegally.” There are over 500,000 individuals with DACA today, and hundreds of thousands of Dreamers who would be eligible if new applications could be accepted.

**a. If you are confirmed, what will you do to protect these Dreamers from deportation and ensure they can continue to live and work in the United States?**

**RESPONSE:** President Trump has stated that he would like to work with Congress to address the situation of the Dreamers. If confirmed as Attorney General, I would carefully review the relevant statutes and regulations and ensure that the Department operates evenhandedly and in the best interest of the country with respect to all individuals.

5. In 2018, then-U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions implemented his zero-tolerance policy to separate families from children, including young babies, at the border. That policy had devastating impacts on families and the young children who were torn from their parents. The last Trump Administration did not develop any system to reunite these families. When some children were finally reunited with their parents, they did not recognize them. Others remain separated today.

**a. Will you commit that, if confirmed, you will not reinstate the zero-tolerance policy?**

**RESPONSE:** I do not have personal familiarity with the impact of the “Zero Tolerance” policy, which President Trump ended by executive order during his first Term. Of course, we should not have policies that encourage human traffickers to use and exploit children as a means of facilitating unlawful entry. To evaluate and render judgment on any policy, I would need to review the relevant information, including the policy, studies, data, information about its implementation, and any applicable law.

6. In 2011, attorneys from your office approved the removal of a two-year-old girl with unexplained bruises from her mother’s custody, believing the child had been abused by her mother’s boyfriend. On two occasions, Florida Department of Children and Families investigators asked your office for permission to remove the girl’s little brother, Ezekiel, from the home, and both times your office denied the request. On May 18, 2011, the boyfriend attacked Ezekiel, slinging him into a dresser and striking him on the back. Ezekiel died of his injuries at just 13 months old.

**a. As the Attorney General of Florida at the time, do you assume responsibility for the devastating outcome of this case?**

**RESPONSE:** On June 2, 2011, my office released a report I ordered setting forth the findings of an investigation by the Statewide Prosecutor and the Inspector General into this tragedy. I accepted the findings of that report.

7. On your personal account on X, formerly known as Twitter, you currently follow Jack Posobiec and you have previously reposted at least one post from Mr. Posobiec. Mr. Posobiec has a long history of posting antisemitic content. In 2017, after the ADL included Mr. Posobiec on a list of alt-right influencers, he responded by tweeting: “The [ADL] would be wise to remember what happened the last time people made lists of undesirables,” along with a picture of himself in front of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial.

**a. Why did you decide to follow Mr. Posobiec?**

**RESPONSE:** I do not recall. I would further note that I do not agree with every statement made by any of the accounts I follow as I expect no one who follows my account agrees with every statement I have made.

**b. To your knowledge, has Mr. Posobiec ever apologized for his past antisemitic comments?**

**RESPONSE:** I have no such knowledge but I also do not pay attention to his public commentary.

8. After the Pulse nightclub shooting in June 2016, you commendably said that anyone who attacked the LGBTQ+ community would be pursued to the fullest extent of the law. In October 2017, you suggested you would support legislative efforts to enact employment protections for members of the LGBTQ community.

However, as Florida’s Attorney General, you actively fought against marriage equality. In one motion, you wrote that allowing same-sex couples in Florida to marry would impose “significant public harm.” In 2010, you pledged to defend Florida’s law banning gay adoption. In 2023, you praised the Florida law referred to as the “Don’t Say Gay” law, and you have compared children being transgender to children bringing a heroin needle to school. When asked about your personal beliefs in 2013, you said “I believe in traditional marriage.”

**a. Are you an ally of the LGBTQ community?**

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will faithfully enforce and uphold the laws of the United States, including those that protect individuals against violence and discrimination. Whether that makes me an ally of the LGBTQ community is for others to decide.

**b. If you are confirmed to serve as Attorney General, will you protect the civil rights of LGBTQ Americans, including transgender people?**

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will faithfully apply and uphold the laws of the United States, including those that prohibit discrimination against *all* Americans.

**c. If you are confirmed to serve as the Attorney General of the United States, do you commit to defending the Respect for Marriage Act?**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 8(b).

9. Public reporting indicates that the President-elect's transition team has used private emails as part of its significantly privatized transition. That is in part due to the incoming Administration's delay or refusal in signing agreements with federal agencies—including the Department of Justice—regarding background checks and ethics and transparency requirements.

**a. Are you communicating with the President-elect's transition team using private email or private devices?**

**If you are:**

**i. Do you believe this practice sufficiently protects you and other potential government officials from vulnerabilities and threats posed by other nations and hostile actors?**

**If you are not:**

**ii. Are you aware of any other nominees or incoming Administration officials who are using private emails or devices to conduct government business?**

**RESPONSE:** It is my understanding the transition team has hired IT and information security personnel and has actively taken steps to safeguard and protect all confidential information. Unfortunately, as we have seen repeatedly over the last several years, government systems have been repeatedly hacked or compromised by insider threats and foreign adversaries. I appreciate your question and, if confirmed, look forward to working with you to better protect our nation's sensitive information.

10. On February 14, 2018, a 19-year-old shooter took the lives of 17 students and staff at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. A few weeks after the shooting, the Florida Legislature passed a bill called the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act, and then-Governor Scott signed it into law. The Act raised the minimum age to purchase a firearm in Florida to 21, established waiting periods and background checks, banned bump stocks, barred some violent or mentally ill people arrested under certain laws from possessing firearms, and established a program to train certain school employees to be armed at school.

The National Rifle Association (NRA) sued you in your capacity as Attorney General and argued that Florida's age qualification for firearm purchases violated the Second Amendment and Equal Protection Clause of the United States Constitution. During litigation, the NRA asked the district judge to allow a 19-year-old plaintiff's request to proceed with the suit under a pseudonym (Jane Doe), a request you asked the court to deny. Former NRA President Marion Hammer later called your actions an "act of bullying."

Regarding the Act, you said: “This bill is not perfect, and sadly it will not bring back the 17 lives lost in the horrific school shooting, but the safety of our children is not a political issue, it’s simply the right thing to do.”

**a. Then-Governor Scott did not support provisions of the law allowing certain school staff to be trained and armed on campus. Were you concerned about that as well? Please explain.**

**RESPONSE:** I do not recall.

**b. As far as the underlying case is concerned, the Eleventh Circuit initially sided with the Northern District of Florida in upholding the law. The NRA appealed and the Eleventh Circuit agreed to rehear it en banc. Now that you are not Florida’s Attorney General, how would you like to see this case resolved?**

**RESPONSE:** I believe it is inappropriate for me to comment on ongoing litigation I brought as the Florida Attorney General.

**c. Do you view your actions in this case as an “act of bullying”?**

**RESPONSE:** As a career prosecutor for 18 years and Florida’s Attorney General for eight years, I have constantly strived to perform my duties with professionalism and civility.

**i. If not, why do you think Ms. Hammer characterized your actions as such?**

**RESPONSE:** I do not know why Ms. Hammer characterized the issue in such a manner.

**d. If you are confirmed as Attorney General of the United States, what is your plan to address gun violence in schools?**

**RESPONSE:** As I stated at my hearing, if confirmed as the next Attorney General of the United States, my principal priority will be to return the Department of Justice to its core mission of keeping Americans safe. I will enforce existing federal gun laws as appropriate and in accordance with the relevant facts and law. If confirmed, I will consult with appropriate officials within the Department regarding gun violence in schools

11. Ahead of Justice Jackson’s confirmation vote in April 2022, America First Policy Institute issued a press release entitled “Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson: Not Supremely Qualified.” The organization claimed that then-Judge Jackson was “WRONG on the law,” “WRONG for families and children,” and “WRONG for people of faith and who believe in the sanctity of life.”

You stated: “At a time when our Nation’s founding principles are constantly being challenged, Judge Jackson has failed to protect the safety of our Nation’s children and has failed to uphold American’s most basic Constitutional rights. If confirmed as a Supreme Court Justice, Judge Jackson will bring her long history of political activism and weak record of interpreting American’s First Amendment rights.”

**a. Do you think Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson is unqualified to serve on the Supreme Court of the United States?**

**i.If so, why?**

**ii.If not, what has changed your perspective since you issued that statement in 2022?**

**RESPONSE:** Since her nomination, Justice Jackson has been confirmed by the Senate and appointed by President Biden to the Supreme Court. I would hope and expect that she would give a fair hearing to all of the cases coming before her, including those involving the Department of Justice, and that she would issue her decisions based upon the best reading of the law.

**b. Do you view all Supreme Court precedent as legitimate and respect it as the law of the land?**

**RESPONSE:** As the highest court under the Constitution, the Supreme Court plays a critical role in our Nation’s system of government, and I would hope that all Americans would regard its decisions as legitimate and the law of the land.

**c. Do you view opinions authored by Justice Jackson any differently than those authored by Chief Justice Roberts or Justices Thomas, Alito, Sotomayor, Kagan, Gorsuch, Kavanaugh, or Barrett?**

**RESPONSE:** No.

12. Following a November 2017 Florida Cabinet Meeting, you received questions by the press about sexual assault survivors and how your office could encourage them to come forward. You said: “As a career prosecutor, you have to come forward, you have the right to face your accuser. As a woman, I’d say please come forward...I think the ‘Me Too’ movement...says a whole lot about where we’re going and where we need to go forward in our culture and in our society now.” Later that same month, while serving as a guest commentator on *Fox News*, you reiterated your support for the “Me Too” movement when you said that the women who came forward with sexual misconduct allegations against Matt Lauer were “heroes.” You further stated, “it only takes one woman to come forward...that’s why the ‘Me Too’ movement is so important.”

However, in 2018, you appeared on *Fox News* several times in defense of Justice Kavanaugh

following the sexual assault allegations against him. You said, “This is a horrible and preposterous attempt to discredit a good man” and cited your personal experience with him as evidence of his good character. You further suggested the allegations against him did not warrant investigation. In January 2023, you also shared a link to the Conservative Political Action Conference’s statement regarding sexual assault allegations that a staffer for Herschel Walker’s U.S. Senate campaign made against now-American Conservative Union Chairman Matt Schlapp and wrote “Stand w Matt Schlapp. A great man” on Truth Social.

**a. Should survivors of sexual assault be encouraged to come forward even if they are accusing public figures?**

**RESPONSE:** Yes.

**b. Do you believe that anyone you know to be “a good man” or “a great man” is incapable of engaging in misconduct with others behind closed doors?**

**RESPONSE:** No.

13. On August 25, 2013, the New York Attorney General filed a lawsuit that accused Donald Trump and his for-profit trade school, Trump University, of engaging in fraudulent and deceptive conduct. Three days later, your then-campaign finance director, Deborah Aleksander, met with longtime Trump executive assistant Rhona Graff and later followed up via email to provide instructions on how to make a \$25,000 donation to your political action committee, And Justice for All. On August 29, 2013, your then-official communications director confirmed to the press that your office was “currently reviewing the allegations in the New York complaint.” On September 9, Mr. Trump signed the \$25,000 check.

**a. Were you aware that your campaign finance director was meeting with representatives of Mr. Trump to arrange this donation while your office was reviewing the New York complaint?**

**RESPONSE:** In 2017, the Florida Commission on Ethics followed the recommendation of the Commission’s Advocate and determined that there was no probable cause to believe that I violated Florida law in soliciting and accepting a donation from President Trump. I was not involved in the decision not to join the New York lawsuit.

**b. Did you direct Ms. Aleksander to speak to Ms. Graff or with anyone affiliated with Mr. Trump during this period?**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 13(a).

**c. At what point were you made aware that Mr. Trump was interested in donating to your campaign?**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 13(a).



**d. Was Mr. Reichelderfer telling the truth about your interactions with Mr. Trump?**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 13(a).

**i. If he was, did you discuss the Trump University case or any potential campaign contributions during this conversation?**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 13(a).

**ii. If he was not, why do you believe Mr. Reichelderfer would misstate the facts?**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 13(a).

In June 2016, your spokesman told reporters that Assistant Attorney General Mark Hamilton reviewed the “few complaints” and concluded “no further action need[ed to] be taken” because New York’s lawsuit was on behalf of all consumers nationwide.

**e. To your knowledge, did any Floridians receive compensation as part of the \$25 million settlement Mr. Trump agreed to in November 2016?**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 13(a).

**f. To your knowledge, did any Floridians who filed complaints related to Trump University not receive compensation?**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 13(a).

14. While serving as Florida’s Attorney General, you oversaw the dismissal of two attorneys who had investigated fraudulent foreclosure practices in Florida. Notably, one of their ongoing cases was against a company that had made significant contributions to Republican candidates in Florida—including you.

**a. Several major corporations are involved in ongoing litigation with the Justice Department. What steps would you take to ensure the Justice Department approaches litigation with the interests of the American people in mind, rather than the interests of major corporations or the President-elect?**

**RESPONSE:** As an initial matter, it is important to emphasize that a report prepared by the Inspector General in the Office of Florida’s Chief Financial Officer concluded that “there is no indication that any state employee violated a law, rule, or policy related to the forced resignation/termination of June Clarkson or Theresa Edwards.” A copy of that report was provided to the Committee. With respect to your question, as was the case when I was Florida Attorney General, decisions I will make if I am confirmed will be made based solely on the relevant law and facts and only after appropriate consultation

with officials within the Department of Justice.

**b. If you are confirmed as Attorney General and the President asks you to fire a Department of Justice employee for political reasons rather than professional reasons, will you do as he asks?**

**RESPONSE:** As I repeatedly stated during my confirmation hearing, I would not have accepted this nomination if I was expected to do so.

15. At the May 2014 meeting of the Florida Cabinet, you offered an honorary resolution to Chaim Shacham, who was then the Consul General of Israel to Florida and Puerto Rico. During your remarks, you noted that you and he had been “dear friends” for years. On your official and personal social media accounts, you frequently posted about events you attended with Mr. Shacam, including one event as recent as May 2015. Ten months later, the *Miami Herald* reported that the Israeli government suspended and replaced Mr. Shacham after Jerusalem prosecutors indicted him for physically abusing one of his young daughters and coercing her to give false testimony.

**a. At what point were you made aware of the charges against Mr. Shacham?**

**RESPONSE:** I do not recall.

**b. Have you had any contact with Mr. Shacham since his suspension?**

**RESPONSE:** I do not recall.

**c. Knowing what you know now, would you still have put forward a resolution honoring Mr. Shacham by name?**

**RESPONSE:** I have insufficient information regarding these allegations to state what I would do in this hypothetical.

16. Last month, *The New York Times* reported that applicants for positions within the second Trump Administration were asked questions not only about their allegiance to the President-elect, but also which candidate they had supported in the three most recent elections; what they thought about the events of January 6, 2021; and whether they believed the 2020 election was stolen. Applicants who gave “wrong” answers were not selected.

**a. In your conversations with President-elect Trump or his transition team, were you asked to pledge an oath of loyalty to President-elect Trump?**

**RESPONSE:** No.

**b. Were you asked who you had supported in the three most recent national elections?**

**RESPONSE:** No.

**c. Were you asked to comment on the events of January 6?**

**RESPONSE:** No.

**d. Were you asked whether you believe the 2020 election was stolen?**

**RESPONSE:** No.

17. You have praised “right-to-try” laws which allow for terminally ill patients to try experimental treatments, calling them a “great example of how we can get government out of the way of people making their own life and death decisions.” However, you have not supported a woman’s right to make her own decisions regarding reproductive care. In addition, in April of last year, you falsely claimed that “six out of 10 women who have had an abortion say they felt pressured into it.”

**a. Do you believe all Americans should be allowed to make their own medical decisions without government interference?**

**RESPONSE:** As you know, health care in the United States is heavily regulated at the federal and state levels. If I am confirmed, decisions with respect to the applicability of any federal law will be made only after careful consideration of the relevant facts and law.

18. In 1965, the Supreme Court recognized a constitutional right to privacy allowing married couples to choose to use contraception in *Griswold v. Connecticut*. Despite that ruling, access to contraception has been inconsistent, and anti-abortion advocates have attempted to block or limit access. In his concurrence in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, Justice Thomas urged the Supreme Court to reconsider substantive due process precedents, including *Griswold*.

**a. If you are confirmed to be Attorney General, will you commit to upholding the Constitutional right to contraception and protecting access to contraception?**

**RESPONSE:** *Griswold v. Connecticut* and the majority opinion in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* are Supreme Court precedent and due respect as such. If I am confirmed, I will follow the Constitution and laws of the United States of America.

19. Reproductive freedom has been a divisive issue. Sadly, some people have moved past rhetoric and have made threats and committed violence against reproductive health clinics. Since 1977, there have been at least 11 murders, 42 bombings, 200 arson attacks, 531 assaults, and thousands of incidents of criminal activities directed at providers, patients, and volunteers at reproductive health clinics.

There are laws on the books to address these attacks. One such law, the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act, or the FACE Act, was passed in 1994 and prohibits injuring, intimidating, or interfering with a person because they are obtaining or providing reproductive health services. Similarly, the law prohibits property damage to reproductive health services facilities.

In the years following the *Dobbs* decision, there has been an increase in incidents of violence and intimidation targeted at reproductive health clinics. In 2022, there was a 100 percent increase in arson attacks, a 231 percent increase in burglaries, a 229 percent increase in stalking incidents, and anthrax and bioterrorism threats against clinics for the first time in over a decade. This uptick in attacks disproportionately occurred in states that protect abortion access.

**a. Do you acknowledge that violence, intimidation, and interference with the lawful exercise of rights has no place in American society?**

**RESPONSE:** I am not familiar with the bases for the statements in this question. If confirmed, I will uphold the law. I hope to work with you to make America safe again.

**b. Will you commit to fully enforcing the laws of the United States and seeking to justly hold those in violation accountable, including through enforcement of the FACE Act and other applicable laws against persons who threaten, interfere with, or commit violence against others based on reproductive health care activity?**

**RESPONSE:** As with all matters, any decisions regarding whether to charge cases under any applicable laws will be based on a thorough analysis of the facts and the governing law.

20. As you may know, the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) is currently experiencing a nationwide staffing crisis, which is severely impacting the operations of nearly all of the Bureau's over 120 institutions. According to the National Council of Prison Locals, since 2016, BOP has lost approximately 9,000 staff positions, and the current staffing shortages are at a "critical level." The Judiciary Committee has conducted oversight hearings showing that understaffed prisons cannot ensure the safety and wellbeing of the incarcerated individuals in their care or adequately provide necessary services for them. As a result of staffing shortages, facilities are also mandating overtime and assigning noncustodial staff, such as teachers, case managers, and medical staff, to perform routine correctional officer duties. These practices hinder the successful implementation of the First Step Act and access to programming that is crucial for individuals' rehabilitation and successful reentry into society. They also undermine staff morale and performance, posing risks to institutional safety and security.

**a. If you are confirmed to be Attorney General, will you commit to working with Congress to help address BOP officer pay and improve staffing levels across the Bureau?**

**RESPONSE:** As I am not currently at the Department, I am not familiar with the details of staffing at the Bureau of Prisons. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the Bureau's resource allocation, staffing needs, and practices

21. The nationwide BOP staffing crisis was exacerbated by a Presidential Memorandum issued by then-President Trump, which implemented a hiring freeze of federal civilian employees and froze the number of positions able to be filled within BOP as of January 22,

2017. This hiring freeze was made permanent a year later, and during that time frame, BOP eliminated 6,000 positions nationwide, a 14 percent staffing decrease from the 43,000 positions in the Bureau in both 2015 and 2016.

**a. If you are confirmed to be Attorney General, will you commit to working to ensure that, at a minimum, BOP's workforce is not subject to a federal hiring freeze during the incoming Administration?**

**RESPONSE:** As I am not currently at the Department, I am not familiar with the details of staffing at the Bureau of Prisons. If confirmed, I look forward to closely reviewing this issue.

22. As Florida Attorney General, you were instrumental in creating a statewide council on human trafficking, to enhance the development and coordination of state and local law enforcement and social services responses to fight all forms of human trafficking and to support victims. Because combatting human trafficking demands a whole-of-government approach, the Justice Department supported the development of the interagency *National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking*, which was released by President Trump in October 2020 and re-released by President Biden in December 2021.

**a. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you commit to combatting all forms of human trafficking—labor and sex trafficking, domestic and transnational sex trafficking, and the trafficking of adults and minors?**

**RESPONSE:** Yes.

**b. Will you also commit to building on proven victim-centered strategies, recognized by both of the last two administrations as the most effective approaches to countering human trafficking threats?**

**RESPONSE:** Yes.

The Department of Justice has been committed to using every available resource to combat human trafficking and to support human trafficking survivors. Effective prosecution and protection have been closely tied to a victim-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive approach. Victims should have access to appropriate financial remedies, including restitution. They should also have access to comprehensive services and legal protections, including protection from inappropriate arrest, detention, prosecution, or removal.

These actions are vital to DOJ's mission of protecting and vindicating the rights of vulnerable individuals. These actions are also critical to the ability of law enforcement officials to bring traffickers to justice, provide victim access to the justice system, and redress the crime's harm through restitution, immigration protections, and other remedies available to survivors.

Protecting victims is required under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, the Crime Victims' Rights Act, the Victims' Rights and Restitution Act, and the Attorney General Guidelines for

Victim and Witness Assistance.

**c. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you commit to using all available resources to protect victims of human trafficking?**

**RESPONSE:** Yes.

23. Last fall, the Justice Department filed an antitrust lawsuit against Visa, accusing it of using anticompetitive practices to illegally monopolize the debit card payments market. According to the Justice Department, Visa's anticompetitive conduct allows it to maintain a market share greater than 60 percent of all debit card transactions and to charge businesses more than \$7 billion in fees each year.

Visa is alleged to have engaged in anticompetitive conduct to protect its market share from the effects of a regulation known as the Durbin Amendment—a bipartisan provision I authored that became law as part of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform Act in 2010. In part, the Durbin Amendment requires debit card-issuing banks to enable at least two different payment networks to process transactions. In this way, merchants are offered a real choice.

According to the Justice Department, Visa leveraged its dominance in the debit market to secure agreements with merchants that lock in many debit transactions onto Visa's network, thus insulating Visa from the competition the Durbin Amendment requires.

**a. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you commit to litigating this case to its conclusion, and to securing an adequate remedy that ensures that businesses have real and competitive options for processing debit card payments, as required by the Durbin Amendment?**

**RESPONSE:** As your question indicates, the Department's lawsuit against Visa is ongoing. Consistent with the past practice of nominees to serve as Attorney General, I believe it would be inappropriate for me to comment on ongoing litigation where the United States is party in interest.

24. Cigarette smoking rates among high schoolers have declined from 28 percent in 2000 to one percent today. However, this progress is being jeopardized by e-cigarettes. Today, nearly two million middle and high school students report vaping.

Under the law, a manufacturer has to prove to the Food and Drug Administration that its e-cigarette is "appropriate for the protection of public health" before it can enter the market. Unless this burden is met and the FDA authorizes the product, it is illegal for that e-cigarette to be sold in the U.S. Despite the FDA authorizing only 34 e-cigarettes to date, more than 6,000 distinct e-cigarette products can be found on store shelves nationwide—nearly all of which are sold in violation of federal law. Because the FDA does not have independent litigation authority, it is up to the Justice Department to institute injunction proceedings to get these illegal products off the market. But DOJ has pursued injunctions against only a handful of manufacturers thus far.

In June 2024, DOJ and the FDA announced the formation of an interagency task force, alongside the ATF, the U.S. Marshals Service, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and the FTC to coordinate criminal and civil enforcement activities against the illegal distribution and sale of e-cigarettes.

**a. Will you commit to enforcing the law and continuing the new task force to ensure that illegal e-cigarette products are not left on the market where they can continue to target and addict our children?**

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed as Attorney General, I will become familiar with the work of the joint task force on unauthorized e-cigarette products. I believe that it is important to enforce federal law vigorously, and I look forward to working with you to better understand the goals of this initiative.

25. Both the Trump and Biden Administrations emphasized the importance of structural remedies when reviewing mergers, which require changes to the structure of the merged entity. As the Justice Department explained in its 2020 merger remedy guidelines, “structural remedies are strongly preferred in horizontal and vertical merger cases because they are clean and certain, effective, and avoid ongoing government entanglement in the market.”

This preference was put into practice in the Justice Department’s online search case against Google, where the agency asked the court to require Google to divest its Chrome internet browser. But late last year, President-elect Trump suggested he may not be aligned with this long overdue shift in antitrust enforcement, claiming that a forced divestiture of Chrome would be “a very dangerous thing because we want to have great companies.”

**a. Will a second Trump Administration continue to pursue structural remedies, like a divestiture of Chrome, to help ensure competition in our economy?**

**RESPONSE:** As your question indicates, you are referring to an ongoing case at the Department of Justice. Consistent with the past practice of nominees to serve as Attorney General, I believe it would be inappropriate for me to comment on ongoing litigation where the United States is party in interest.

26. For decades, there had been a near-total lack of antitrust enforcement against Big Tech. The Biden Administration has since brought multiple cases against Big Tech companies, including Google, Facebook, Apple, and Amazon—continuing a trend that began during the first Trump Administration.

In August 2024, the Justice Department secured a trial victory against Google in the online search market, with the judge declaring that the company “is a monopolist, and it has acted as one to maintain its monopoly.”

**a. Do you commit to continuing this antitrust scrutiny against Big Tech platforms to help ensure competition in our economy?**

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, the Antitrust Division will continue its historic mission of enforcing the Nation's antitrust laws to, among other things, ensure and promote competition. This mission extends to social media and technology companies.

27. With the advent and proliferation of publicly accessible generative AI products, the volume of deepfake content available online is exploding. The overwhelming majority of this material is sexually explicit and is produced and distributed without the consent of the person depicted. According to research, more nonconsensual, sexually-explicit deepfake videos were posted online in 2023 than every other year combined.

Sexually-explicit deepfake content is used to exploit, harass, and abuse not only celebrities and other public figures, but everyday Americans as well—including our children.

A bipartisan group of members of the Senate Judiciary Committee have introduced bills to address the issue.

**a. If you are confirmed to be Attorney General, will you commit to both enforcing the laws on the books and working with members of the Senate Judiciary Committee to pass legislative changes to better combat the proliferation of deepfake child sexual abuse materials and other nonconsensual sexually-explicit content?**

**RESPONSE:** With respect to current law, if confirmed, I will work to enforce these laws as appropriate to prevent abuse, harassment, and exploitation—particularly those targeting children. With respect to pending legislation, I look forward to working with officials within the Department of Justice including the Office of Legislative Affairs as well as you and all the members of this Committee to discuss how we can best move forward.

In 2022, there were over 87 million files of suspected child sexual abuse material (CSAM) reported. The intersection of child abuse and technology has created a public health crisis.

**b. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you commit to combatting child exploitation, including by holding social media and other companies that aid/abet and facilitate child exploitation accountable?**

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will ensure that child exploitation crimes are appropriately investigated and prosecuted.

There is a mountain of evidence about the harm to children caused by social media. The tech industry wants to be trusted to handle child safety on its own, without transparency or accountability, but they have proven they are unwilling to protect the most vulnerable amongst us.

**c. If confirmed as Attorney General, what will you do to protect children online and how will you hold the adults who are allowing this to happen accountable?**



**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will ensure that child exploitation crimes are appropriately investigated and prosecuted.

28. In recent years, corporate concentration in the food and agriculture industries has led to concerns about impact on consumer choice, competition, and pricing. These concerns—including the effect on grocery prices—ultimately led to the recent termination of Kroger’s proposed acquisition of Albertson’s. Today, sectors such as fertilizer, meatpacking, farm chemicals, food processing, grocery stores, crop seeds, and farm equipment each are dominated by only a few companies. The companies tell the public that this consolidation helps them survive in increasingly competitive industries and will improve efficiencies to keep costs affordable for consumers. In reality, families and farmers continue to see their costs rise.

**a. If confirmed, will you commit to vigorous enforcement of the antitrust laws in order to ensure competitive food and agriculture industries for our families and farmers?**

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, the Antitrust Division will continue its historic mission of enforcing the Nation’s antitrust laws to, among other things, ensure and promote competition in the food and agriculture industries.

29. The Immigration Court system is part of the Executive Office for Immigration Review within the Department of Justice. This administrative court system, like other court systems, is rooted in principles of justice and due process. Immigrants often face obstacles to fair hearings in immigration court because of inadequate translation services and the inability to access counsel. These due process concerns are particularly acute for detained immigrants who are detained in facilities in remote regions of the country, who cannot access counsel, and who experience difficulties navigating our complex immigration laws. The incoming Trump Administration has promised to rapidly expand immigration detention to prepare to deport millions of immigrants. The incoming “border czar,” Tom Homan, has stated that the Trump Administration will reinstate family detention and has threatened to deport undocumented adults with young U.S.-born children.

You have worked as a lobbyist on behalf of the private prison company, GEO group. As you know, the federal government relies heavily on GEO to detain immigrants.

**a. If confirmed as Attorney General, how will you ensure that immigration courts will provide immigrants, including those in immigration detention, a fair day in court?**

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed as Attorney General, I would carefully review any statutes, executive orders, and other applicable laws to ensure that the Department’s immigration proceedings fully comport with all federal laws.

The Attorney General has the authority to take immigration cases pending at the Board of Immigration Appeals and issue decisions. Through this “certification” process, the Attorney General directs the Board to refer immigration cases to the Attorney General who can then

advance new legal interpretations and overturn Board precedent (*see* 8 C.F.R. § 1003.1(h)(1)(i)). Former Attorney General Jeff Sessions repeatedly used this authority to overturn longstanding precedent, such as his decision in *Matter of Castro-Tum*, 27 I&N Dec. 271 (AG 2018), a case that allowed immigration judges to manage their case dockets by prioritizing certain cases over others, and *Matter of A-C-A-A-*, 28 I&N Dec. 84 (AG 2020), a case restricting the Board's discretion to rely on stipulations by parties in immigration court.

**b. Please share what types of immigration cases you might direct the Board to refer to you under this certification authority.**

**RESPONSE:** As you note, Congress has vested the Attorney General with the authority to review the decisions of the Board of Immigration Appeals. If confirmed as Attorney General, I will examine this issue with the advice of other Department officials to determine which cases, if any, are appropriate for decision under this authority.

30. Kash Patel, President-elect Trump's presumptive nominee to be Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, has repeatedly insinuated or argued that the FBI used its confidential human sources (CHSs) to instigate the January 6th attack on the U.S. Capitol. He has called for this conspiracy theory to be included in a "wider investigation of DOJ and FBI activity overall." He has further claimed that January 6th is an example of the FBI's "illegal use of confidential human sources for political gain." In December, the DOJ's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) released a report debunking Mr. Patel's conspiracy theory. The OIG found that "none" of the FBI's CHSs were "authorized to enter the Capitol or a restricted area, or to otherwise break the law on January 6, nor was any CHS directed by the FBI to encourage others to commit illegal acts on January 6." The OIG found that the FBI tasked only three (3) CHSs with collecting information on domestic terrorism subjects on January 6th. The FBI worked with CHSs to gather information on domestic extremists who led the attack on the U.S. Capitol.

**a. Do you have any reason to disagree with the Inspector General's findings? Please provide a "Yes" or "No" answer.**

**RESPONSE:** I have not read or reviewed the Inspector General's findings and have no basis upon which to offer an informed opinion.

**b. Do you have any reason to agree with Mr. Patel's debunked claims blaming the FBI for the attack on the Capitol? Please provide a "Yes" or "No" answer.**

**RESPONSE:** I have not previously considered Mr. Patel's statement and I have no basis upon which to offer an informed opinion.

Mr. Patel was reportedly investigated for improperly disclosing classified information. In Apr. 2021, David Ignatius of the *Washington Post* reported that Patel was "facing Justice Department investigation for possible improper disclosure of classified information, according to two knowledgeable sources who requested anonymity because of the sensitivity of the probe." The "sources said the investigation resulted from a complaint made this year by an intelligence agency, but wouldn't provide additional details."

**c. Is it important that senior national security officials can be entrusted to handle sensitive and classified materials? Please provide a “Yes” or “No” answer.**

RESPONSE: Yes.

**i. Are you concerned that as Attorney General you would be working with an FBI Director who may have improperly disclosed classified material?**

RESPONSE: My only insight into this question is the quote above relying on two anonymous sources that “wouldn’t provide additional details.” Without substantiation or further information, I have no basis upon which to offer an informed opinion.

**d. Do you agree that the Chair and Ranking Member of the Senate Judiciary Committee or their designees should be fully briefed on any criminal investigations into Mr. Patel before he is possibly confirmed as FBI Director?**

RESPONSE: The process this Committee uses to evaluate nominees is for the Committee to decide.

Mr. Patel reportedly received immunity for his testimony in the case regarding President-elect Trump’s handling of classified documents following his first term in office. On Nov. 2, 2022, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that Mr. Patel “appeared before the grand jury last month and refused to provide information by repeatedly invoking his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination.” A federal judge then ruled that Mr. Patel should receive “immunity for his information” and “the Justice Department couldn’t force Mr. Patel to testify without such protection against his statements being used against him in some future prosecution.”

**e. Are you concerned that the presumptive nominee for Director of the FBI seemingly believed he faced criminal liability for his actions such that he required immunity for any testimony under oath?**

RESPONSE: My only insight into this question is the above quoted news story, which I have not read in its entirety, citing proceedings before a grand jury, proceedings of which are generally entitled to the strictest secrecy. I have no other basis upon which to offer an informed opinion.

**f. Mr. Patel was a witness in the Mar-a-Lago case, claiming that Trump declassified the documents recovered—a claim his former colleagues have disputed. Do you agree that the Chair and Ranking Member of the Senate Judiciary Committee or their designees should be able to review Mr. Patel’s witness testimony before a vote is conducted on his nomination so that the Committee may review the veracity of his claims and judge his fitness for office?**

**RESPONSE:** The process this Committee uses to evaluate nominees is for the Committee to decide.

31. Volume Two of Special Counsel Jack Smith's report has not yet been publicly released.

**a. Pending ongoing criminal proceedings, do you commit to releasing Volume Two of Special Counsel Smith's report to the Senate Judiciary Committee, including to the Chair and Ranking Member, or their designees?**

**RESPONSE:** As your question indicates, and based only on publicly available reports, it is my understanding that Volume 2 of Mr. Smith's report relates to an ongoing investigation and prosecution. As a consequence, I believe it would be inappropriate for me to comment on this matter.

**b. Do you commit to making available immediately for review Volume Two of Special Counsel Smith's report to the Chair and Ranking Member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, or their designees?**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 31(a).

32. According to the Department of Justice Supplement to the Standards of Conduct, 28 C.F.R. § 45.2(a), "no employee shall participate in a criminal investigation or prosecution if he has a personal or political relationship with" either "any person or organization substantially involved in the conduct that is the subject of the investigation or prosecution" or "any person or organization which he knows has a specific and substantial interest that would be directly affected by the outcome of the investigation."

**a. Would you commit to enforcing this regulation, in consultation with appropriate advisors, should you be confirmed?**

**RESPONSE:** I expect that if I am confirmed, all employees of the Department of Justice will comply with all applicable standards of conduct.

28 C.F.R. § 45.2(b) requires a supervisor to "relieve" such an employee from participating in a criminal investigation or prosecution" unless "after full consideration of all facts and circumstances" they determine that "the relationship will not have the effect of rendering the employee's service less than fully impartial and professional" and "the employee's participation would not create an appearance of a conflict of interest likely to affect the public perception of the integrity of the investigation or prosecution."

**b. Would you commit to relieving employees with personal or political relationships as defined in 28 C.F.R. § 45.2(a) from participating in criminal investigation or prosecution where, after consulting with appropriate advisors, it is determined that the employee either cannot (a) impartially and professionally render their service, or (b) would create an appearance of a conflict of interest?**

**RESPONSE:** I will take seriously my responsibilities as outlined in the appropriate regulations and will make any decision with respect to relieving employees from participation in any case only after an evaluation of the facts and the relevant law and after consultation with appropriate officials.

Kash Patel has a political relationship with President-elect Trump as defined by 28 C.F.R. § 45.2(c)(1). Mr. Patel is a fact witness in multiple investigations concerning President-elect Trump's conduct, including both the January 6 and classified documents investigations, and was called by President-elect Trump to serve as a character witness in *Trump v. Anderson*. Mr. Patel has served as a board member of Trump Media & Technology Group Corp., which runs President-elect Trump's Truth Social social media platform. Mr. Patel has published a list of 60 perceived political enemies of President-elect Trump in his book *Government Gangsters*. Mr. Patel also has a trilogy of children's books depicting President-elect Trump as a fairytale king that premises multiples stories on President-elect Trump's baseless accusations that he won the 2020 presidential election and other conspiracies. Given the nature of Mr. Patel's relationship with President-elect Trump, any participation by Mr. Patel in any criminal investigation or prosecution in which President-elect Trump would have a specific and substantial interest would inherently create a conflict of interest.

**c. Would you commit to consulting with appropriate advisors regarding participation by Mr. Patel in any criminal investigation or prosecution in which President-elect Trump has a specific and substantial interest or which involves his conduct?**

**RESPONSE:** This is a hypothetical question. In the event it was necessary to consider this question, if I am confirmed I would rely on the facts and the relevant law and would consult appropriate officials within the Department of Justice before making any decisions with respect to any employee of the Department and their participation in any criminal investigation or prosecution.

33. During your nomination hearing, I asked you if you had "heard the recording of President Trump on January 2, 2021, when he urged the Secretary of State of Georgia to 'find 11,780 votes' and declare him the winner of that state," to which you responded, "I've heard about it through clips, but no, Senator, I've not heard it." However, in August 2023—after Fulton County, Georgia District Attorney Fani Willis announced that her office had indicted President-elect Trump and 18 others on 41 charges related to their attempts to overturn Georgia's 2020 election results, including President-elect Trump's demand that Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger "find 11,780 votes"—you appeared on "Saturday Report" on *Newsmax* and told Rita Cosby that President-elect Trump's actions in the indictment were "not a crime" and were instead "free speech." You went on to tell Ms. Cosby that "none" of the specific charges President-elect Trump faced were "appropriate" and that they "will not hold up, and, if by some crazy, crazy chance she got a conviction, it will be appealed and it will be overturned."

**a. If you had not heard President-elect Trump's call to Georgia Secretary of State Raffensperger, why did you feel comfortable making such authoritative statements about charges based on this call?**

**RESPONSE:** I made those comments in a television interview. My statement was my opinion.

**b. Do you think it was appropriate for you to publicly speak on the legal strength of a case when you did not review a major piece of evidence?**

**RESPONSE:** I made those comments in a television interview. I did not make those statements in a court of law.

**c. If you are confirmed, will you commit to reviewing the underlying evidence of a case before speaking publicly about it?**

**RESPONSE:** I recognize that the responsibilities of the Attorney General are different than the responsibilities associated with appearing on a television news program.

34. The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 (FISA) was intended to enable the collection of foreign intelligence inside the United States while safeguarding the privacy and civil liberties of Americans. However, FISA's protections have at times proven insufficient or have been outright violated. Section 702 of FISA in particular has been a valuable but controversial surveillance tool. While aimed at collecting the communications of foreigners located abroad, this authority ultimately enables warrantless searches of Americans' private communications.

This practice of searching Section 702 databases for Americans' communications without a warrant, often in violation of existing rules, has been the subject of bipartisan criticism and reform efforts. The most recent reauthorization of Section 702 contained reforms aimed at further reducing compliance violations, especially by the FBI, but failed to protect Americans' communications from warrantless searches.

**a. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you do everything in your power to ensure that federal government surveillance complies with existing Constitutional, statutory, and executive branch requirements?**

**RESPONSE:** Yes.

**b. Will you commit to working with Congress on reforms that safeguard the Fourth Amendment rights of Americans when Section 702 is before Congress for reauthorization in 2026?**

**RESPONSE:** I would always be happy to work with Congress on the best way to keep Americans safe and to protect their civil liberties. As I stated at my hearing, if I am confirmed, I will look closely at the current structure of Section 702, consult with appropriate officials within the Department of Justice and formulate my view with respect to congressional reauthorization and amendment.

35. Since the prosecution of Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg, the United States has been a leader in ensuring that the perpetrators of atrocities are held accountable for their crimes. At the Department of Justice, the Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section (HRSP) of the Criminal Division is responsible for prosecuting human rights violators under federal criminal statutes proscribing torture, war crimes, genocide, female genital mutilation, and recruitment or use of child soldiers. The Section also prosecutes human rights violators under other statutes, including U.S. criminal and civil immigration and naturalization laws in order to revoke U.S. citizenship or other legal status and obtain criminal penalties as appropriate.

HRSP also includes the War Crimes Accountability Team, which centralizes and strengthens the Department's work to hold accountable those who have committed war crimes and other atrocities in Ukraine and elsewhere.

In December 2022, Congress enacted the bipartisan Justice for Victims of War Crimes Act, which expands federal jurisdiction over certain war crimes, and, in December 2023, the Department brought charges against four Russian nationals, marking the first prosecution under the War Crimes Act of 1996.

**a. If confirmed, do you commit to continuing to prioritize the Department's vital efforts to hold the perpetrators of human rights violations and atrocity crimes accountable?**

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will be committed to the Department of Justice's work in holding accountable those who violate federal laws proscribing war crimes and other human rights violations, just as I worked as the Attorney General of Florida to target human traffickers, drug dealers, and other criminals who targeted the most vulnerable. I am not currently familiar with the work of the Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section, but if confirmed, will get to know the work of this section.

36. While war powers under the Constitution are divided between the legislative and executive branches, it is Congress that is assigned the power to declare war and decide when to embroil the nation in armed conflict. Nevertheless, some executive branch lawyers, including in opinions authored by the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel, have claimed that the President has vast powers under Article II to go to war without authorization from Congress.

**a. Do you commit to ensuring that any legal opinions issued by the Department under your leadership respect Congress's constitutional role regarding the decision to go to war?**

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed as Attorney General, I will work with the Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Legal Counsel to ensure that his or her advice reflects the best reading of the law and the separation of powers under our Constitution, including both the President's authority to direct the use of the U.S. armed forces under appropriate circumstances and Congress's power to Declare War.

37. Torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment (CIDT) of detainees are abhorrent practices that are banned under both international and domestic law. Nevertheless, in times of crisis or fear some have sought to justify their use.

**a. Do you commit to upholding U.S. law prohibiting such practices and agree with former Attorneys General Sessions and Barr that torture is never lawful?**

**RESPONSE:** Congress has barred torture and cruel and inhumane treatment under several federal laws. If confirmed as Attorney General, the Department will enforce those laws.

38. Under both the Constitution and longstanding Supreme Court precedent, international law is part of U.S. law and must be faithfully executed by the President. Nevertheless, some Office of Legal Counsel opinions have asserted that the executive branch can disregard binding international law, including the United Nations Charter, if Congress has not enacted implementing legislation.

**a. Do you commit to ensuring that, if confirmed as Attorney General, the executive branch complies with international law that is binding on the United States?**

**b. Will you disavow the view that a President can unilaterally disregard international laws that bind the United States?**

**RESPONSE:** The Supreme Court has made clear that some international agreements are self-executing and other agreements are non-self-executing as a matter of our domestic law. *Medellin v. Texas*, 552 U.S. 491 (2008). If confirmed as Attorney General, I will consult with the Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Legal Counsel and provide advice to the President that is consistent with the best understanding of domestic law and of international law.

39. In August 2017, following the “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, you noted that as Florida Attorney General your office had prosecuted two men who plotted to kill a Black inmate and stated that, “[r]acism is alive and thriving in our state and country.”

**a. Do you still acknowledge that racism exists in our country?**

**RESPONSE:** Yes.

40. The Department of Justice’s Office for Victims of Crime administers *Victims of Crime Act* (VOCA) grants to support services for crime survivors in the form of compensation grants, which help cover medical costs and mental health counseling, and victim assistance grants that are distributed to organizations in each state to provide various services, including crisis intervention. VOCA grants are funded through the Crime Victims Fund (CVF), which is supported by the payment of criminal fines, penalties, forfeitures, and special assessments by individuals and organizations convicted of breaking federal law. However, revenues for the CVF



have declined, due in part to a steady decline in prosecutions against major corporations, leading to corresponding cuts in grants to victims and victim service providers.

In 2021, President Biden signed my *VOCA Fix to Sustain the Crime Victims Fund Act*, which directed monetary penalties from federal deferred prosecution and non-prosecution agreements into the CVF to increase funding for state victim compensation and assistance programs. And last Congress, I introduced the *Crime Victims Fund Stabilization Act* with Senator Murkowski, which would further strengthen the CVF by diverting to it surplus funds collected through the *False Claims Act* that currently go to the general Treasury.

**a. Do you believe assisting victims through VOCA grants is a critical public policy for breaking cycles of violence? If you are confirmed, what will you do to ensure victims of crime have access to the resources and services and that the CVF remains solvent?**

**RESPONSE:** As a state prosecutor and Florida's Attorney General, I prioritized serving the victims of crime and their families. That work was incredibly rewarding and stands as a highlight of my career. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that all programs administered by the Department of Justice are thoroughly assessed and effectively implemented.

**SENATOR TED CRUZ**  
**U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary**

**Questions for the Record for Pamela Jo Bondi**  
**Nominated to Serve as Attorney General of the United States**

**I. Questions**

1. As Attorney General of the United States, will you commit to establishing a task force to investigate the disappearance of over 300,000 unaccompanied children who were initially taken into custody by the Biden Administration after crossing the Southern border and at other ports of entry, and to take all necessary actions to locate them, including rescuing those who may be victims of human trafficking or abuse?

**RESPONSE:** I will make combating human trafficking a priority at the Department of Justice, just as I did as Attorney General of Florida. I am very concerned about the impact that our open border has had in attracting unaccompanied children who may be exploited and victimized.

**Senator Josh Hawley  
Questions for the Record**

**Pamela Jo Bondi  
Nominee, Attorney General of the United States**

1. The Department of Justice is responsible for administering compensation under the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA). RECA expired in 2024. Do you support a reauthorization of RECA?

**RESPONSE:** As I stated in my hearing, I was horrified to learn of the problems your State is facing. While I have not had the chance to examine this issue closely, if confirmed, I welcome the opportunity to work with your office concerning this issue.

2. If you are confirmed, how do you plan to prioritize combating human trafficking?

**RESPONSE:** When I was Florida's Attorney General, I led many efforts to combat human trafficking including founding the Statewide Council on Human Trafficking to identify counseling and resources for trafficking survivors, working to pass comprehensive legislation to combine Florida's existing human trafficking statutes with an increase in penalties against human traffickers, and launching several educational initiatives aimed at conveying the dangers of human trafficking across the State. If confirmed, I hope to continue those efforts to combat human trafficking.

3. How do you plan, in particular, to combat the rise in labor trafficking of minors across the southern border?

**RESPONSE:** As I stated in my hearing, I have seen firsthand that the open border had led to horrific increases of human trafficking and abuse of minors. If confirmed, I will do everything in my power to support and defend President Trump's efforts to stop the lawlessness at the border and protect minors who have been trafficked.

4. In your view, do Americans have a First Amendment right to protest at abortion clinics?

**RESPONSE:** Yes.

5. In your view, should the Department of Justice prioritize investigating and prosecuting attacks on religious institutions?

**RESPONSE:** Yes.

6. In our meeting in my office, we discussed possible destruction of documents by Joe Biden's DOJ. Since that conversation, have you learned of further destruction of records?

**RESPONSE:** While I do not know whether there has been the further destruction of records, I am committed to ensuring the Department's compliance with the Federal Records Act and,

where justified by the facts and the law, enforcing violations of 18 U.S.C. § 2071 and any other applicable Federal records laws.

7. I sent a preservation letter to the DOJ after our conversation. Do you know if destruction of documents continued after DOJ received that letter?

**RESPONSE:** While I do not know whether individuals in the Department have destroyed documents after the Department received the letter, I am committed to ensuring the Department's compliance with the Federal Records Act and, where justified by the facts and the law, enforcing violations of 18 U.S.C. § 2071 and any other implicated Federal records law.

8. The case of *Murthy v. Biden*, which began as *Missouri v. Biden*, revealed that the Biden Administration, including the FBI, coerced social media companies to censor speech that Joe Biden didn't like. Do you believe it is appropriate for the Department of Justice to jawbone social media companies in this way?

**RESPONSE:** Without directly addressing any pending or potential litigation, I share the concern about censorship by social media companies. Addressing such concerns was an important priority for me as Attorney General of Florida, and it would be a priority for me if confirmed.

9. Do you intend to investigate any jawboning actions taken the Biden administration?

**RESPONSE:** As I indicated at the hearing, all investigations by the Department of Justice must be based strictly on the facts and the law. I am not in a position to address any specific potential investigations at this time.

10. Will you commit to responding in a timely way to document requests?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will consult with personnel at the Department's Office of Legislative Affairs to ensure timely and appropriate responses to oversight inquiries.

11. Will you commit to making Department of Justice employees available to testify at oversight hearings?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will consult with the relevant Department personnel and ensure that Department employees are available for hearings consistent with Department policies and practices, applicable laws and regulations, and recognized Executive Branch confidentiality interests.

**Senator Thom Tillis  
Questions for the Record  
Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing  
for the Nomination of the  
Honorable Pamela Jo Bondi to be  
Attorney General of the United States**

1. Foreign adversaries threaten our country's economic and innovation dominance through intellectual property (IP) theft and abuse. The most notable threat is the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). And while the CCP is not the only foreign bad actor undermining U.S. IP, it is the one that poses the greatest threat.

a. Can I count on your commitment to actively confront the growing number of international IP crimes?

**RESPONSE:** The Department of Justice has identified intellectual property crime as a priority area due to the wide-ranging economic impact on U.S. businesses and the health and safety of the American public. If I am confirmed, the Department will continue to focus on prosecution of the most serious cases of trademark counterfeiting, trade secret theft, copyright piracy and the related criminal statutes protecting intellectual property.

b. Can I count on your commitment to have your office engage with my office on IP matters?

**RESPONSE:** Yes. If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these matters further with your office, other Members of Congress, and appropriate officials within the Department of Justice.

2. In 2019 the Department of Justice issued a joint statement with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and the National Institute of Standards and Technology. This statement clarified that all available patent remedies – including injunctive relief – should be available to holders of standards-essential patents (SEPs) if they meet the legal requirements for such remedies. The Biden Administration unfortunately withdrew the 2019 joint statement, which I considered a principled and clear statement from the first Trump Administration. I wrote the DOJ regarding my concern on numerous occasions.

a. Will you commit to revisiting this issue and consider reestablishing the agency's support for principles that will further strengthen our strong innovation economy and ensure that the U.S. remains the innovation leader?

**RESPONSE:** This is an important question raising complex issues that I have not had the opportunity to study in detail, but if confirmed I would welcome the opportunity to discuss the matter further with Members of Congress and appropriate officials within the Department of Justice.

3. For over thirty years, military families at Camp Lejeune were tragically exposed to toxic chemicals while serving on base. But equally tragic is the fact that our government spent the next thirty years avoiding accountability.

This is why Congress passed the Camp Lejeune Justice Act in 2022 to provide a pathway to justice for military families in North Carolina exposed to toxic chemicals.

Over two years later, there are now 408,000 claims filed, but only about 2,300 cases have been settled in court. The current Administration's Elective Option has resulted in less than 230 offers. That's unacceptable when veterans are literally dying while waiting for justice.

Can I have your commitment that, once you are confirmed, you will work with me and my colleagues to explore every avenue to resolve claims and cases quickly, and to support the military families who were stationed in North Carolina at Camp Lejeune?

**RESPONSE: If confirmed as Attorney General, I would welcome the opportunity to work with you, your office, or your colleagues regarding this issue.**

4. Many are concerned about the rise of third-party litigation funding (TPLF). This relatively new industry has seen rapid growth. Nonetheless, very little is known about this segment of the financial sector because in most states TPLF firms are not required to disclose their activities, even in the very cases they are funding.

In addition to potentially driving up the cost of litigation, strategic legal decisions — for example, choosing whether to accept a settlement agreement — may be impaired by the profit motive of the financier. A funder may direct attorneys to reject reasonable settlement offers that may be in a plaintiff's best interest and hold out for a higher potential payment that maximizes investment return.

Given that the information we have about TPLF is anecdotal, increased disclosures could be beneficial. Will you commit to working with me on examining whether there needs to be increased transparency surrounding TPLF agreements in our courts?

**RESPONSE: If I am confirmed as Attorney General, I will work with you concerning issues underlying third-party litigation funding, to the extent that such matters fall within the purview of the Department of Justice.**

5. Lawsuit abuse often preys on the most vulnerable.

a. Will you commit to working with my office to identify safeguards to ensure these individuals are protected from predatory lawyers while still having access to legitimate legal recourse?

b. Will you commit to examining forum shopping and ways within your jurisdiction to ensure that our legal system operates fairly and consistently across state lines?

**RESPONSE:** During my eight years as Attorney General of Florida, we worked to protect the most vulnerable citizens of the State, including the elderly and the poor. If confirmed as U.S. Attorney General, I would look forward to discussing with you what measures the Department of Justice might take to protect citizens from predatory lawyers or from the lawsuit abuse through forum shopping or other means.

6. DOJ is a lead member of the federal multi-agency task force formed in June 2024 to combat the distribution and sale of illicit e-vapor products. Many on this Committee suspect the taskforce was formed as a response to the oversight hearing that we had about the lack of acceptable law enforcement response to the presence of these illegal products in the United States. These products are primarily from China and send significant proceeds back to the Chinese Communist Party. The task force promised to “bring together multiple law enforcement partners” to take swift action “using all of the enforcement tools available.” However, we have seen very little activity arising from the task force to fight the flood of illegal Chinese e-vapor products and punish those who facilitate their importation and distribution. Do you commit to continuing, and potentially strengthening, the work of the task force?

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed as Attorney General, I will become familiar with the work of the joint task force on unauthorized e-cigarette products. I believe that it is important to enforce federal law vigorously, and I look forward to consulting with Department officials to better understand the goals and value of this initiative.

**Nomination of Pamela Bondi  
To be Attorney General of the United States  
Questions for the Record  
Submitted January 16, 2025**

**QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR WHITEHOUSE**

**Please answer each question and sub-question individually and as specifically as possible.**

1. In your Questionnaire, you said, “In the event of a potential conflict of interest, I will consult with the appropriate Department of Justice ethics officials and act consistent with governing regulations.” Will you *follow* the advice of career DOJ ethics officials? If the answer is not “yes,” please explain.

**RESPONSE:** As you note, I stated I will consult with the appropriate Department of Justice ethics officials. However, I will own any recusal decision.

2. You are the Chair of the Center for Litigation at America First Policy Institute (AFPI), a 501(c)(3) organization. Over two years, AFPI paid you over \$500,000.

a. Who is funding AFPI?

**RESPONSE:** As your question indicates, I served as Chair of the Center for Litigation. I was not engaged in fundraising on behalf of AFPI. It is my understanding that AFPI has consistently complied with all relevant donor disclosure rules.

b. Have you ever participated in fundraising for AFPI?

**RESPONSE:** I have attended fundraising events organized by, and for the benefit of, AFPI, but I have not solicited funds on behalf of AFPI.

c. Will you disclose AFPI’s donor information to DOJ ethics officials who have a duty to screen for conflicts?

**RESPONSE:** I will provide information with respect to my former employers, including AFPI, consistent with governing laws, rules, and regulations covering the Department of Justice. In the event of a potential conflict of interest, including with respect to former clients, I will consult with the appropriate Department of Justice ethics officials and act consistent with governing regulations.

d. If no, how can DOJ recusal and conflict of interest policies be effective if you fail to disclose who is ultimately bankrolling your pay at AFPI?



**RESPONSE:** In the event of a potential conflict of interest, I will consult with the appropriate Department of Justice ethics officials and act consistent with governing regulations.

3. While you were the Florida Attorney General, several billionaires contributed large sums to your re-election campaign. For example, Manoj Bhargava, the founder of 5-Hour Energy, contributed at least \$10,000. Mr. Bhargava reportedly is now under a major federal criminal tax investigation.

a. As Attorney General, how will you handle major criminal investigations into former donors who contributed to your campaigns?

**RESPONSE:** As was the case when I was Florida Attorney General, decisions I will make if I am confirmed will not be influenced by former donors to my political campaigns or donors to political campaigns of others.

b. Will you pledge to recuse from any investigations involving former donors to your campaigns?

**RESPONSE:** In the event of a potential conflict of interest, I will consult with the appropriate Department of Justice ethics officials and act consistent with governing regulations.

4. Do you plan to shut down January 6 riot prosecutions currently under way?

**RESPONSE:** I have made no decisions with respect to *any* criminal cases currently being pursued by the Department of Justice, and I believe it would be inappropriate for me to do so. This includes, but is not limited to, criminal cases arising out of the events of January 6.

5. Have you discussed any January 6 cases with Mr. Trump or members of his team?

**RESPONSE:** No.

6. Prosecutions against Trump allies for schemes to use fake electors to subvert the 2020 election remain pending in several states, including Georgia, Arizona, Michigan, Nevada, and Wisconsin. Will you commit that DOJ will not interfere with any of these state cases as they proceed?

**RESPONSE:** As your question indicates, these are ongoing criminal cases. It would be inappropriate for me to comment on them.

7. DOJ plans to continue the case against Mr. Trump's two co-defendants, Walt Nauta and Carlos de Oliveira, in the Mar-a-Lago classified documents prosecution. Will you commit to ensuring that the prosecution of Nauta and de Oliveira can reach its conclusion without political interference?

**RESPONSE:** All prosecutions including those you reference in your question will be conducted on the basis of the facts and the law and in accordance with Department guidelines.

8. Will you commit to providing this Committee with a copy of Volume 2 of the Special Counsel's report when the Nauta and de Olivera cases are resolved?

**RESPONSE:** As your question indicates, and based only on publicly available reports, it is my understanding that Volume 2 of Mr. Smith's report relates to an ongoing investigation and prosecution. As a consequence, I believe it would be inappropriate for me to comment on this matter.

9. Will you commit to preserving records related to investigations of President Trump or members of the Trump Administration?

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, the Department of Justice will abide by all relevant and applicable recordkeeping laws in all circumstances.

10. Will you commit to preserving records related to investigations of members of Congress?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 9 above.

11. Will you commit to not firing anyone from Justice Department simply because they participated in an investigation of President Trump or members of the Trump Administration?

**RESPONSE:** As I stated in my hearing, if I am confirmed, no one—including political opponents of the President—will be prosecuted on the basis of their political views. At the same time, employees of the Department of Justice who abuse or misuse their office toward improper ends will have no future within the Department and will be subject to dismissal and where appropriate and after considering the facts of each case may be subject to criminal prosecution. All of that said, I have made no charging decisions with respect to any criminal prosecutions the Department may undertake if I am confirmed, and I believe it would be inappropriate for me to do so.

12. Why did you attend Mr. Trump's felony hush money trial in New York?

**RESPONSE:** I attended President Trump's trial in New York as a friend and a supporter. I was not there as a lawyer and I did not represent President Trump in that matter.

13. Would you characterize the storming of the Capitol by Trump supporters on January 6, 2021, as a "peaceful transition of power"?

**RESPONSE:** A smooth transition of power occurred between President Trump and President Biden on January 20, 2021.

14. In December 2024, the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General published a report entitled, *Review of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Handling of Its Confidential Human Sources and Intelligence Collection Efforts in the Lead Up to the January 6, 2021 Electoral Certification*.

a. Do you have any reason to doubt the Office of the Inspector General's conclusion that it "found no evidence . . . showing or suggesting that the FBI had undercover employees in the various protest crowds, or at the Capitol, on January 6?"

b. Do you have any reason to doubt the Office of the Inspector General's conclusion that none of the FBI's Confidential Human Sources in Washington on January 6, 2021, was "directed by the FBI to encourage others to commit illegal acts on January 6?"

**RESPONSE:** I have not reviewed the Inspector General's report and have no basis upon which to provide an informed opinion with respect to its contents.

15. On October 21, 2022, Steve Bannon was sentenced to four months in prison after the Department of Justice charged him with criminal contempt of Congress for defying a congressional subpoena. Do subjects of a lawfully issued congressional subpoena have a legal obligation to comply with such a subpoena?

**RESPONSE:** I cannot comment on any particular case, but the Supreme Court has recognized that both Houses of Congress have the right to compel the production of documents and testimony to further legitimate legislative interests.

16. Social welfare groups, organized under Section 501(c)(4) of the Tax Code, are required to report political spending to the Federal Election Commission (FEC) and to report political activity to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

a. If an organization files inconsistent sworn statements regarding its political activity with the FEC and the IRS, can the group be liable under 18 U.S.C. § 1001 or 26 U.S.C. § 7206?

**RESPONSE:** Enforcement of our tax laws and the laws protecting the integrity and transparency of our election process should be a priority for the Department of Justice. Determining whether there is criminal liability under specific statutes would require an individualized assessment of the facts presented in a specific case, consistent with the Principles of Federal Prosecution. As in all matters, if confirmed, I would look at the individualized facts and circumstances and follow the law and any policies of the Department.

b. Does that inconsistency provide predication for further investigation?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I would evaluate any such situation based on actual facts and circumstances if and when presented.

17. If you catch Putin and his agents meddling in American elections, will you hold them accountable even if they are interfering to help Mr. Trump?

**RESPONSE:** Yes.

18. The Oklahoma Murraugh Building bomber was a white, right-wing American veteran. The Las Vegas Tesla bomber was a white, right-wing American veteran.

a. Will you fully and properly investigate domestic terror threats for domestic terrorists who are white and right-wing?

**RESPONSE:** Racist ideologies are abhorrent, and if I am confirmed, acts of racially or ethnically motivated violence will be appropriately investigated and prosecuted.

b. What if the right-wing group supports President Trump? What if President Trump supports the group?

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, terrorists will be appropriately investigated and prosecuted, regardless of their ideology, political label, or supporters.

19. If you are confirmed, what steps would you take as Attorney General to combat the rise of hate crimes and right-wing extremism?

**RESPONSE:** Acts of racially, ethnically, or politically motivated violence should be appropriately investigated and prosecuted.

20. Will you commit to treating violent crimes that meet the definition of “domestic terrorism” as a top priority?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, appropriately investigating and prosecuting crimes of terrorism will be a priority for the Department.

21. In your testimony, you acknowledged the problems plaguing the Bureau of Prisons and the importance of fully implementing the First Step Act. If confirmed, will you commit to working with my office on solutions to the Bureau’s challenges on First Step Act implementation?

a. If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that Earned Time Credits are awarded to individuals on time and consistent with the law?

b. In addition to building new residential reentry centers where appropriate, what steps will you take to ensure that individuals are placed in prerelease custody or on supervised release in a timely fashion as required by law?

c. If confirmed, will you cooperate fully with, and implement to the fullest extent possible, any recommendations resulting from the Office of the Inspector General’s

ongoing evaluation of the Bureau's implementation and operation of First Step Act programming?

**RESPONSE:** Because I am not currently at the Department, I have not had the opportunity to study programming capacity in the Bureau of Prisons. I look forward to learning more about this issue and the bureau's programs to ensure compliance with the law.

22. In 2022, my and Senator Cornyn's Law Enforcement De-escalation Training Act became law.

a. If confirmed, will you support the COPS Office's efforts to fully implement the Law Enforcement De-escalation Training Act?

b. If confirmed, will you support full funding for the COPS Office' implementation of the Law Enforcement De-escalation Training Act?

**RESPONSE:** As I am not currently at the Department, I am not familiar with the details of the COPS Office's implementation of the Law Enforcement De-escalation Training Act. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the Office's resource allocation, needs, and practices.

23. Deposits into the Crime Victims Fund have fallen in recent years, resulting in cuts to state and local victims' services.

a. If confirmed, what steps will you take to identify the causes of the decrease in deposits to the Fund, to address decreases in deposits, and to increase transparency to enable Congress, the Department, and stakeholders to work together on this issue?

b. If confirmed, will you support legislative efforts to increase and stabilize deposits into the Crime Victims Fund?

**RESPONSE:** As a state prosecutor and Florida's Attorney General, I prioritized serving disadvantaged victims of crime. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that all programs administered by the Department of Justice are thoroughly assessed and would welcome input from both Congress and the public on these issues.

24. Last year, Chairman Grassley and I introduced the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Reauthorization Act of 2024. If confirmed, will you support my and Chairman Grassley's work to reauthorize the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act as soon as possible?

**RESPONSE:** Like you I appreciate the need for programs to prevent delinquency and improve juvenile justice systems. While I cannot commit at this time to support any particular legislation, I look forward to working with officials within the Department of Justice including the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the Office of Legislative Affairs as well as you and Chairman Grassley to discuss how we can best move forward together.

25. Do you agree that allowing law enforcement to obtain the identities of the beneficial owners of shell companies would help law enforcement to uncover and dismantle criminal networks?

**RESPONSE:** The Corporate Transparency Act is currently the subject of litigation. Consistent with the past practice of nominees to serve as Attorney General, I believe it would be inappropriate for me to comment on ongoing litigation where the United States is a party in interest.

26. DOJ has been defending the bipartisan Corporate Transparency Act, a national security law which requires corporations to report beneficial owners, in several ongoing lawsuits. The first Trump Administration supported this law's enactment. If you are confirmed, will DOJ continue to defend the Corporate Transparency Act?

**RESPONSE:** As your question indicates, the Corporate Transparency Act is subject to litigation where the United States is a party. Consistent with the past practice of nominees to serve as Attorney General, I believe it would be inappropriate for me to comment on ongoing litigation where the United States is a party in interest.

27. Will you commit to providing DOJ's Task Force KleptoCapture with the resources and staffing necessary to continue pending litigation and robustly pursue new lines of investigation and litigation?

**RESPONSE:** I am not familiar with the work of Task Force KleptoCapture, but if I am confirmed as Attorney General, I will familiarize myself with its work and that will inform my decision concerning its pending cases and the resources to be provided to the initiative in the future.

28. If you are confirmed, how would you use DOJ to protect voters from discriminatory voting laws after *Shelby County v. Holder*? Can you provide an example of a case in which you believe Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act was used effectively?

**RESPONSE:** I have not had an opportunity to study this precise issue. However, if confirmed, I commit to enforcing the Voting Rights Act in a fair and impartial manner, and I will work protect the voting rights of all Americans.

29. Will you guarantee that, if you are confirmed, DOJ will not engage in or support efforts to interfere with the lawful tabulation and certification of election results?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 28 above.

30. DOJ under Attorney General Sessions saw a 90% reduction in corporate penalties during the first year of the Trump Administration, from \$51.5 billion to \$4.9 billion. Will you commit to investigating this dramatic drop-off in corporate fines for violations of federal law and reversing these trends?

**RESPONSE:** I am not familiar with the facts underlying the reduction of corporate penalties that you describe or whether that was justified, but it would not be surprising to me to find that as the Obama Administration came to a close, senior Department of Justice officials worked to bring their pending cases to resolution, including through agreement on corporate penalties.

31. There is ample evidence that the fossil fuel industry may have violated federal law by fraudulently misrepresenting the dangers of fossil fuels and their impact on the climate. Will you commit to reviewing DOJ's tobacco victory and taking an honest look at whether there are grounds to bring a civil RICO case against the fossil fuel industry, modeled after the 1990s tobacco litigation?

**RESPONSE:** As with all laws under the Department of Justice's enforcement authority, if confirmed, I will enforce the Racketeer Influenced & Corrupt Organization Act as appropriate and in accordance with relevant facts and law.

32. Do you believe that so-called "First Amendment privilege" shields corporations from sharing information about internal communications requested by subpoenas or during discovery in civil litigation?

**RESPONSE:** As a career prosecutor for 18 years and Florida's Attorney General for eight years, I have not had occasion to consider that issue.

33. Would the First Amendment protect a company that conspired to engage in illegal activity, under a theory that the conspiracy constituted "speech" or exercised a "right to associate"?

**RESPONSE:** As a career prosecutor for 18 years and Florida's Attorney General for eight years, I have not had occasion to consider that issue.

34. If you are confirmed, will you defend the well-established constitutional right to cross state lines for health care, including for abortion?

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, I will follow the Constitution and laws of the United States of America.

35. If you are confirmed, will you hold social medial platforms accountable for their roles in child exploitation, drug trafficking, and the spread of harmful misinformation and disinformation? Will you do so even if President-Elect Trump or big Trump donors like Elon Musk ask you not to?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will ensure that these crimes are appropriately investigated and prosecuted. That said, I have no reason to believe that President Trump or Mr. Musk would make any requests like the ones you suggest.

36. Under the first Trump administration, DOJ reversed its prior litigation positions in a number of high-profile cases, many in the civil rights and voting rights arena.

- a. Are you concerned about the effect reversals might have on the DOJ's institutional credibility before the courts and the American people?
- b. If confirmed, what process will you use to determine whether DOJ should reverse a prior litigation position?

**RESPONSE:** At the start of the Biden Administration, DOJ reversed its prior litigation positions in a number of high-profile cases, including one where the Supreme Court vindicated the Trump Administration's prior position by a vote of 9-0. *See Terry v. United States*, 141 S. Ct. 1858 (2021). If confirmed as Attorney General, I will consult with Department officials, including the Solicitor General, and ensure that the Department of Justice's litigation positions reflect my best judgment of the law.

37. When is it appropriate for DOJ to decline to defend an act of Congress?

**RESPONSE:** The Department of Justice has a longstanding practice of defending the constitutionality of Acts of Congress where reasonable arguments can be made in their defense. The Department has recognized exceptions to that rule where the Act of Congress intrudes on the prerogatives of the Executive Branch, or as in the case of President Obama's decision on the Defense of Marriage Act, where the President has concluded that the statute is unconstitutional and should not be defended.

38. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you provide the resources necessary to pursue complex criminal tax abuse investigations and prosecutions?

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, I will make budgetary decisions in consultation with appropriate officials within the Department as well as with other relevant officials, including those in the Office of Management and Budget.

39. In December 2024, the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General published a report summarizing its investigation into the Department's use of compulsory process to obtain communications records of Member of Congress, congressional staff, and members of the news media.

- a. Do you agree with the Inspector General's conclusion that "[t]he use of compulsory process to obtain records of members of the news media and congressional personnel may implicate separate and important constitutional considerations?"

**RESPONSE:** I agree that there are important constitutional interests implicated by subpoenas directed at the records of members of the press and of Congress. There are, of course, important government interests in obtaining evidence relevant to criminal and national security investigations.



b. If confirmed, will you maintain the Department's revised News Media Policy and policy on congressional investigations, including that, "if a non-disclosure notice would delay notice to a Member of Congress, Congressional Office, or a Congressional Staffer, the prosecutor must disclose such information in the application to the Court?"

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, I will familiarize myself with the Department's policies in these areas, consult with the appropriate officials, and make a determination as to the best course forward.

c. If confirmed, will you ensure that each of the recommendations included in the Inspector General's report is fully implemented?

**RESPONSE:** I am not familiar with the recommendations in the Inspector General's report or the degree to which the Department has, or has not, implemented them.

40. Do you have any reason to disagree with the "long held" position of the Department's Office of Legal Counsel that "the suggestion that the President has a constitutional power to decline to spend appropriated funds . . . is supported by neither reason nor precedent"?

**RESPONSE:** I have not read the opinion of the Office of Legal Counsel to which you refer. If I am confirmed, and in the event the question comes before me, I will consult with appropriate officials including the Office of Legal Counsel and carefully evaluate the law before reaching a conclusion.

**Senate Judiciary Committee**  
**Hearing on The Nomination of the Honorable Pamela Jo Bondi**  
**to be Attorney General of the United States**  
**January 15, 2025**  
**Questions for the Record**  
**Senator Amy Klobuchar**

1. At his nomination hearing Attorney General Mukasey said: "Hiring is going to be based solely on competence and ability and dedication and not based on whether somebody has got an 'R' or a 'D' next to their name."

- Will you commit to doing the same?

**RESPONSE:** I am committed to hiring in a manner consistent with the applicable legal standards governing federal employment.

- Will you commit to keeping in place long standing protections for all employees at the Department of Justice, regardless of whether they work in the Criminal Division, as an agent at FBI, or as a voting rights lawyer?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department complies with all applicable constitutional, statutory, and regulatory protections for all employees of the Department of Justice.

2. At your hearing when I asked you about the importance of the free press you said that "going after the media just because they are the media is wrong, of course" and committed that under your leadership the Justice Department will respect the importance of the free press. The Department of Justice traditionally follows its "News Media Policy" that carefully balances First Amendment rights of journalists with national security and other concerns. This policy has been integral in ensuring that journalists have the freedom to investigate and report the news to their communities, without fear of law enforcement improperly intruding on their work.

- Will you commit to preserving and following these policies?
- What steps will you take to ensure that the Department of Justice does not misuse subpoenas or surveillance to target journalists or their sources?

**RESPONSE:** I agree that there are important interests implicated by subpoenas directed at the records of members of the press. The Department's policies seek to balance those interests against the important government interests in investigating criminal and national security matters. If confirmed, I will familiarize myself with the Department's policies in these areas, consult with the appropriate officials, and make a determination as to the best course forward.

3. In addition to cracking down on the flow of fentanyl through our border, I believe we need to focus our attention on the online sale of this deadly drug. Recently, the DEA found that one-third of drug cases had direct ties to social media.

That's why I've worked hard to advance a bipartisan bill led by Senators Roger Marshall and Jeanne Shaheen, and Rep. Angie Craig in the House to require social media companies to report fentanyl and other dangerous drug sales on their platforms to the DEA.

Last year at a hearing with the Tech CEOs on online child exploitation, I asked the CEOs if they supported the bill. I was disappointed that only one CEO said they did.

- Do you believe tech companies are doing enough to keep fentanyl out of the hands of our kids?
- Will you prioritize stopping drug trafficking on social media platforms and will you commit to working with us to help get the bill signed into law?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will examine this issue closely with Department officials and ensure that the Department takes appropriate steps to address the various distribution methods for fentanyl.

4. An estimated 1 in 12 American adults has had explicit images distributed of them without their consent. These privacy violations often destroy victims' lives. The rise of AI-generated deepfakes — where you can't even tell if what you're seeing is real or not — is making these problems worse. Young women and girls are especially vulnerable. One recent study shows 96 percent of deepfakes are sexually explicit and feature women who didn't consent to their creation.

I am leading efforts, with Senator John Cornyn on the *SHIELD Act* and with Senator Ted Cruz on the *Take it Down Act*, which together would prohibit the nonconsensual online distribution of actual and deepfake explicit and intimate images, and will give the Justice Department the tools they need to hold perpetrators accountable.

- Do you agree that a federal criminal law prohibiting the nonconsensual distribution of intimate images would help protect victims?

**RESPONSE:** Like you, I am troubled by the rise of AI-generated deepfakes and agree that young women and girls are especially vulnerable. While I cannot commit at this time to supporting any particular legislation, I look forward to working with officials within the Department of Justice including the Office of Legislative Affairs as well as you and Senators Cruz and Cornyn to discuss how we can best move forward together.

- Both the *SHIELD Act* and *Take It Down Act* passed the Senate last year unanimously. Will you commit to working with me to get these bills signed into law?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response immediately above.

5. Every year more than 750 American women are shot to death by intimate partners. That's one woman every 12 hours. And according to the Department of Justice, nearly half of women killed by intimate partners involve a dating partner.

For nearly a decade, I led the effort to close the so-called "boyfriend loophole" and prevent dating partners convicted of domestic violence from buying or owning a gun. We were able to include provisions to close the boyfriend loophole as part of the *Bipartisan Safer Communities Act*. I am committed to ensuring we have the strongest possible protections in place, which is why I will continue working to extend these protections to abusers subject to protective orders and to convicted stalkers.

- Will you commit to enforcing the boyfriend loophole provisions of the *Bipartisan Safer Communities Act*?

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, the Department of Justice will faithfully enforce all federal law as appropriate based on the law and the facts of each case.

6. I am very concerned about the rise in hate crimes, including against members of both the Muslim and Jewish communities following the Hamas terrorist attack in Israel. This is unacceptable. Every person has the right to feel safe and secure in their home, in their community, and in their house of worship - no matter who they are or how they worship. All Americans must be able to practice their faith without fear.

Unfortunately, we have seen thousands of hate crimes motivated by antisemitism and anti-Muslim bias over the last decade, including at the Dar Al-Farooq Islamic Center in my home state of Minnesota, which was the target of a bombing in 2017.

Our country has witnessed members of our Muslim communities attacked, Jewish Community Centers threatened, and too many other public sites, such as the Hmong American community center in Minnesota, have been vandalized with racial slurs.

- Do you agree that federal law enforcement officials must work with state and local law enforcement to combat crimes against every community that is victimized by hate crimes, including the Muslim and Jewish communities?

**RESPONSE:** Yes.

7. The ODNI's 2024 Annual Threat Assessment warned that Russia continues to seek to "undermine the United States and the West" including through malign influence operations aimed at sowing "domestic discord" and cast doubt on elections.

- Will you commit that under your leadership the Justice Department will continue to combat Russian malign influence operations?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department works to combat the various threats from foreign countries, including Russia and China.

8. After Putin's brutal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, the Justice Department stood up the War Crimes Accountability Team to hold accountable those who have committed war crimes and other atrocities during Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

- Will you commit to ensuring that the War Crimes Accountability Team has the funding and resources it needs to continue its important work?

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, I will make budgetary decisions in consultation with appropriate officials within the Department as well as with other relevant officials, including those in the Office of Management and Budget.

**Nomination of Pamela Jo Bondi to be Attorney General of the United States  
Questions for the Record  
Submitted January 16, 2025**

**QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR COONS**

1. If President-elect Trump asked you to do something you judged to be illegal or unethical, would you resign? Please answer yes or no.

a. If you would not resign, what would you do?

**RESPONSE:** As I stated repeatedly, I would not have accepted the nomination to serve as Attorney General if I believed President Trump would ask me to do this.

2. If President-elect Trump directed the Federal Bureau of Investigation to stop investigating a member of his cabinet in order to hide alleged misconduct, is that illegal?

a. How would you respond to that directive?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 1 above.

3. During your Senate Judiciary Committee nomination hearing on January 15, I asked you: “What would you do if your career [Department of Justice] DOJ prosecutors came to you with a case to prosecute, grounded in the facts and law, but the White House directs you to drop the case?” You responded: “Senator, if I thought that would happen, I would not be sitting here today. That will not happen—will not happen. Every case will be prosecuted based on the facts and the law that is applied in good faith, period.”

a. I understand your response to be a prediction that President-elect Trump would not direct you to abandon an otherwise meritorious prosecution, but how would you respond—your prediction aside—if the President-elect *did* ask you to abandon an otherwise meritorious prosecution?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 1 above.

b. Would you resign? If not, why not?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 1 above.

4. Does the President have the authority to order the FBI to initiate an investigation into a specific individual?

**RESPONSE:** The President is the chief law enforcement officer of the United States and all criminal investigations must comply with the Constitution and all relevant statutes.

5. Does the President have the authority to order the Department of Justice to initiate a prosecution of a specific individual?

**RESPONSE:** The President is the chief law enforcement officer of the United States and all prosecutions must comply with the Constitution and all relevant statutes.

6. What is the remedy if the President violates his constitutional duty to faithfully execute the laws?

**RESPONSE:** The remedy would depend upon the facts and circumstances of a particular violation. The remedy could arise in a court of law, or in Congress, or from the People.

7. During your Senate Judiciary Committee nomination hearing on January 15, I appreciated your comments on, and interest in, criminal justice reform.

a. Please elaborate on your support of the *First Step Act* and your commitment to supporting legislation and administrative action to fully implement the *First Step Act*.

b. What do you see as the opportunities to better support individuals leaving prison to ensure that they do not engage in recidivism?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will study and thoroughly review the Department's policies related to recidivism. I look forward to working with you on policies to address this issue.

8. Please describe your priorities and interests in reforming the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

**RESPONSE:** Because I am not currently at the Department, I am not familiar with the all aspects of the Federal Bureau of Prisons' current operations. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the Bureau's operations and needs and considering appropriate reforms.

9. Evidence shows that solitary confinement has significant mental health consequences when used for extended periods of time.

a. Do you believe solitary confinement should only be used as a last resort?

b. Do you believe solitary confinement should ever be used for juveniles?

**RESPONSE:** I have not had the opportunity to study this issue. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing it, including the facts of the situation and existing law and policies.

10. What factors would you consider when advising the President on whether to exercise his clemency power?

**RESPONSE:** As a general matter, Article II, Section 2 of the Constitution grants the President the unqualified power to "grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offences against the United States,

except in Cases of Impeachment.” I would advise on clemency decisions, if asked, after reviewing the relevant facts and circumstances of each case.

11. The President-elect has claimed that millions of people voted illegally in the 2020 presidential election.

- a. Do you agree, and if so, on what evidence do you rest your claim?
- b. How—if at all—do you plan on using the resources of the Department of Justice to investigate alleged instances of voter fraud in the 2020 presidential election?

**RESPONSE:** I am not familiar with the statements in question. As I explained at the hearing, I traveled to Pennsylvania as an advocate to the campaign, and during that period, saw and heard a number of things that gave me serious concerns about whether local officials were complying with the Commonwealth’s election laws. Many Americans continue to share concerns about the integrity of the 2020 election. If confirmed as Attorney General, I will work to restore Americans’ confidence in our electoral processes, including by ensuring that the Department of Justice appropriately investigating and enforcing federal laws concerning voter fraud. I am not, however, in a position to comment upon whether the Department would investigate any particular matter.

12. What will you do to ensure vigorous enforcement of the *Ethics in Government Act*, bribery and honest services laws, and anti-nepotism laws?

**RESPONSE:** I will enforce the Ethics in Government Act, bribery and honest services laws, and anti-nepotism laws as appropriate and in accordance with the relevant facts and law.

13. Senators Durbin, Lee, Grassley, Klobuchar, Cruz, Blumenthal, Hawley, Rubio, Hirono, Welch, and I introduced a bill last year called the *Bipartisan Inspector General Access Act*. The bill would expand the jurisdiction of the DOJ’s Office of the Inspector General to include alleged DOJ attorney misconduct. Currently, the DOJ Inspector General has no authority to investigate professional misconduct by DOJ lawyers. DOJ is the only agency whose Inspector General has such a jurisdictional carve-out.

- a. Would you support legislation that would close this loophole?

**RESPONSE:** I believe it would be inappropriate to commit at this time to a position with respect to any proposed federal legislation. If I am confirmed and called upon to provide my position, I will do so only after careful consideration and consultation with appropriate officials within the Department of Justice.

- b. More generally, how would you ensure that the DOJ’s Inspector General is permitted to carry out his or her mission of objective, independent oversight of the Department of Justice?



**RESPONSE:** I recognize the importance of the Inspector General in furthering the Department of Justice's mission and would—where possible and appropriate—strive to facilitate cooperation within the Department to enable the Inspector General to carry out his work.

14. What is your interpretation of the effect of the Emoluments Clause on the ability of President-elect Trump or his family members to continue doing business with foreign governments after inauguration?

**RESPONSE:** In my eighteen years as a state prosecutor and my eight years as Florida's Attorney General, I have not had the occasion to consider this question. In the event such a question was to come before the Department of Justice, I would evaluate it based on the specific facts and relevant law and in consultation with appropriate officials within the Department including the Office of Legal Counsel.

15. The United States' scientific and technological leadership is a prime reason for our economic advancement over many decades. Our innovation ecosystem is driven by the rewards of scientific innovation made possible by a vibrant capitalist economy. It relies on generous funding of scientific research and an educational system that is broad-based at the bottom and unparalleled in availability and quality at the top. It further relies on immigration, a commitment to sustained investment, and certainty provided by the rule of law. How will the Department of Justice, under your leadership, work to support components of the Executive Branch with missions focused on promoting scientific and technological progress, such as the National Institutes of Health, the National Institutes of Standards and Technology, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)?

**RESPONSE:** I share your assessment that the United States' scientific and technological leadership is a prime reason for our economic advancement. If confirmed, I will work closely with components across the Department of Justice and other agencies across the government on these important priorities.

16. Research by the USPTO has found that intellectual property (IP)-intensive industries account for more than 40% of U.S. economic activity and support 44% of the U.S. workforce, or 63 million jobs. IP drives the U.S. economy and strong IP protections inspire confidence in the U.S. market. Can you provide assurances that the Department of Justice will prioritize the investigation and prosecution of IP theft in the United States?

**RESPONSE:** I share your concern in this important area. I understand that the Department of Justice has identified intellectual property crime as a priority area due to the wide-ranging economic impact on U.S. businesses and, in some situations, the health, safety, and security of the American public. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department continues to combat these significant harms.

17. In its "Made in China 2025" plan as well as its "China Standards 2035" plan, China makes clear its intention to supplant the United States as the global technology leader, particularly in critical and emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, 5G/6G,

semiconductors, quantum computing, and biotechnology. One think tank has reported that China is currently leading the United States in the development of 37 of 44 critical and emerging technologies. China has also shown that it will use its legal system to benefit domestic industries and gain an unfair advantage over U.S. innovators.

- a. Will you stand up to China and other countries that use their legal systems to gain unfair advantage over U.S. innovators? If so, how?

**RESPONSE:** I understand that the Department of Justice works with law enforcement counterparts across the globe to ensure they are prepared to address crimes involving intellectual property, cyber intrusions, and digital evidence. In addition, prosecutors in the Criminal, Civil and National Security Divisions work closely with U.S. Attorneys' Offices throughout the country on a wide range of cases involving foreign theft of intellectual property. If confirmed, I will examine these and other efforts to ensure that the Department is effectively building relationships with foreign partners to counter foreign threats to our intellectual property.

18. The total volume of worldwide piracy in counterfeit products was estimated in 2019 to be 2.5% of world trade (USD \$464 billion). Counterfeit products such as fake pharmaceutical drugs or faulty electronics can cause direct physical harm to Americans, and the profits from these illicit sales often go directly to the coffers of organized crime. How will you use Department of Justice resources to address this growing threat?

**RESPONSE:** I share your concerns in this area. The Department of Justice has identified intellectual property crime as a priority area due to the wide-ranging economic impact on U.S. businesses and the health and safety of the American public. If I am confirmed, the Department will continue to focus on prosecution of the most serious cases of trademark counterfeiting, trade secret theft, copyright piracy and the related criminal statutes protecting intellectual property.

19. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce estimates that digital piracy costs the American economy between \$29.2 billion and \$70.1 billion and between 230,000 and 560,000 jobs every year. According to the International Intellectual Property Alliance, the core copyright industries—which include film and television, music, publishing, and video games—employ 9.6 million American workers.

- a. How would you fight to protect American IP in the face of increasing digital piracy?

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, the Department will continue to focus on prosecution of the most serious cases of trademark counterfeiting, trade secret theft, copyright piracy and the related criminal statutes protecting intellectual property.

- b. Numerous foreign websites illicitly stream U.S. copyrighted material. Is there a role for the Department of Justice to play in ensuring that U.S. copyrighted materials retain U.S. copyright protection?

**RESPONSE:** Yes. If I am confirmed, the Department will continue to focus on prosecution of the most serious cases of trademark counterfeiting, trade secret theft, copyright piracy and the related criminal statutes protecting intellectual property.

20. Our peer nations have sought to combat digital piracy by foreign websites through the use of no-fault injunctions, which mandate that U.S. internet service providers block access to the infringing foreign website until the copyright dispute is resolved. Some peer nations are going further by using dynamic injunctions to protect against mirror websites that launch after the initial offending website is taken down.

a. Do you think the United States would benefit by emulating these peer nations and enacting laws that provide for the availability of no-fault injunctions?

**RESPONSE:** This is an important question raising complex issues that I have not had the opportunity to study in detail, but if confirmed I would welcome the opportunity to discuss the matter further with Members of Congress and appropriate officials within the Department of Justice.

b. Do you think no-fault injunctions engender due process concerns? Why or why not?

**RESPONSE:** This is an important question raising complex issues that I have not had the opportunity to study, but if confirmed I would welcome the opportunity to discuss the matter further with Members of Congress and appropriate officials within the Department of Justice.

21. Do you support the revocation or modification of the 14th Amendment's constitutional guarantee of birthright citizenship?

**RESPONSE:** The Fourteenth Amendment defines the category of persons who are entitled to birthright citizenship. If I am confirmed as Attorney General and asked to provide an opinion as to the appropriate interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment, I would examine the law and facts, consult with appropriate Department of Justice officials, and advise the President.

22. The *Victims of Child Abuse Act* authorizes funds to directly support the establishment and operation of local and regional Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs), as well as training and technical assistance related to improving the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect. These centers are intended to coordinate a multidisciplinary response to child abuse (e.g., law enforcement, child protection/social services, medical services, mental health) in a manner that ensures child abuse victims receive the support services they need and do not experience the investigation of child abuse as an added trauma. Nearly 400,000 children were served at CACs in 2022. Will you include full funding for the *Victims of Child Abuse Act* in the Department of Justice's proposed budget?

**RESPONSE:** I appreciate the need to provide support services for child abuse victims. If I am confirmed, I will make budgetary decisions and recommendations in consultation with

appropriate officials within the Department as well as with other relevant officials, including those in the Office of Management and Budget.

23. Studies show that 5% of gun dealers sell 90% of guns that are subsequently used in criminal activity. How will you direct the Department of Justice to instruct the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives to crack down on dealers that funnel thousands of guns to city streets?

**RESPONSE:** As I said in my opening statement, if confirmed as the next Attorney General of the United States, my overriding objective will be to return the Department of Justice to its core mission of keeping Americans safe and vigorously prosecuting criminals, and that includes getting back to basics: gangs, drugs, terrorists, cartels, our border, and our foreign adversaries.

24. Last year, President Biden signed the *Recruit and Retain Act*, a bill I led with Senator Fischer. The bill improves the Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grants by making them more responsive to onboarding costs and hiring challenges, particularly for small and under-resourced law enforcement agencies.

a. Do you commit to fully implementing the provisions of the *Recruit and Retain Act*?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will implement in good faith all federal laws as they apply to the Department of Justice.

b. Do you commit to including a recommendation to fully fund the COPS program in the Department of Justice's proposed budget?

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, I will make budgetary decisions in consultation with appropriate officials within the Department as well as with other relevant officials, including those in the Office of Management and Budget.

c. Under your leadership, what strategies will the Department of Justice employ to ensure that small and under-resourced law enforcement agencies have access to COPS grants?

**RESPONSE:** As a former state prosecutor and Florida's Attorney General I appreciate the vital role of, and challenges posed to, smaller law enforcement agencies. If I am confirmed, I would look forward to meeting with members of COPS to discuss how they can best serve the priorities of the Department of Justice including supporting local law enforcement.

25. Last year, Congress reauthorized Section 702 of the *Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act*. The bill included the codification of several internal FBI measures that the agency had adopted to prevent the unauthorized, warrantless searches of Americans' private data.

- a. If confirmed, how will you ensure that the FBI is actually implementing these reforms?
- b. Section 702 comes up for reauthorization next year—do you support reauthorizing Section 702 and for how long?
- c. What reforms, if any, do you think Congress should include in a Section 702 reauthorization bill?

**RESPONSE:** As a career prosecutor for 18 years and Florida's Attorney General for eight years, I have not had occasion to consider those issues. As I stated in my hearing, if confirmed, I will review these procedures, consult with appropriate officials at the Department, and formulate my views with respect to these issues.

**Senator Richard Blumenthal**  
**Member, Senate Committee on the Judiciary**  
**Written Questions for Pamela Jo Bondi**  
**Nominee to be Attorney General of the United States**  
**January 16, 2025**

1. In 2008, then Attorney General Michael Mukasey promulgated the Attorney General Guidelines for Domestic FBI Operations. These Guidelines established the framework that governs when an agent may conduct certain inquiries and engage in certain investigatory activities. Notably, to open a predicated investigation, which affords nearly the full range of investigatory tactics, an agent must possess information about or an allegation of criminal activity or a connection to foreign intelligence needs.

These predication requirements serve as an important check on the possibility that FBI agents could engage in unwarranted investigative activities. Indeed, one of the chief complaints that President Trump and many of his supporters made about the Russian investigation in 2016-17 is that it was not properly predicated, though the DOJ Inspector General concluded to the contrary.

In light of President-elect Trump's and Mr. Patel's threats to use the power of DOJ and the FBI to pursue investigation and prosecution of those perceived to have wronged the President-elect in some way, shape, or form, I am concerned that these guidelines will be watered down or outright ignored.

a. If confirmed, do you commit to following and enforcing the predication guidelines as drafted currently?

**RESPONSE:** I have not had occasion to review these guidelines. If I am confirmed I will do so and consult with appropriate officials within the Department as to their application.

b. If confirmed, do you have any plans to change the Attorney General Guidelines for Domestic FBI Operations with respect to predication requirements?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 1(a) above.

c. If you do, if confirmed, make any changes to these requirements, will you commit to making those changes public?

**RESPONSE:** I will consult with appropriate officials within the Department of Justice before making any decision with respect to whether changes are necessary and whether such changes should be made public.

2. President-elect Trump has declared that he has the absolute right to do whatever he wants with the Justice Department. He has also repeatedly attacked the Special Counsel investigations as politically motivated and illegitimate. I am concerned that President Trump will seek to have incriminating or embarrassing records and evidence from these investigations destroyed and will

direct you to take actions to achieve that outcome. Federal law, however, requires the preservation of these records and criminalizes concealment or destruction of records.

- a. If confirmed, will you commit today to follow the applicable laws and protect and preserve these records?

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, the Department of Justice will abide by all relevant and applicable recordkeeping laws in all circumstances.

- b. If President Trump or anyone affiliated him directs the destruction of these records, do you, if confirmed, commit to not follow that order and to notify this Committee?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 2(a) above.

3. In your hearing testimony, and in our sit-down meeting, you stated that the only work you did for Qatar involved a single meeting on anti-human trafficking efforts leading up to the 2022 World Cup.

- a. Is that a complete description of your lobbying work for Qatar – a single meeting?

**RESPONSE:** This is not accurate. I do not recall stating in my testimony or when I met with you in your office that my work consisted of a single meeting. Moreover, a review of the transcript of the hearing supports my recollection. I believe the confusion may be that I represented Qatar with respect to a single *issue* – human trafficking.

- b. Please identify the other people who attended that meeting and describe the role you played at the meeting?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 3(a) above.

4. Abuses against migrant workers leading up to and during the 2022 World Cup in Qatar are well documented, including deaths, injuries, unpaid wages, crippling debt that was made to be paid back, and a visa system that prevented workers from leaving the country if they wanted to.

- a. Were you aware of Qatar's mistreatment of workers during your employment by Qatar as a lobbyist?

**RESPONSE:** I was aware that Qatar's track record with respect to this issue was not satisfactory but that Qatar was taking positive steps for change.

- i. If so: What did you do to put a stop to this mistreatment? Why wasn't it effective?

- ii. If not: What steps did you take at the time to understand the true facts on the ground regarding Qatar's treatment of workers before you agreed to become their lobbyist?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 4(a) above.

5. Your Senate Judicial Questionnaire indicates that you were retained by a law firm to work with 9/11 families regarding their case against Saudi Arabia, including participating in a meeting with President Trump in 2019, at which he promised to release documents then being withheld by the FBI. Those documents were ultimately withheld, however, after the Department of Justice invoked the State Secrets Privilege shortly thereafter, purportedly to protect national security.

Since that time, we have made strides to declassify additional 9/11 documents. That declassification, however, raises significant questions about the legitimacy of DOJ's initial invocation of the State Secrets Privilege.

- a. If confirmed, will you commit to supporting the declassification and release of 9/11-related materials, subject to withholding only for legitimate national security concerns?

**RESPONSE:** I believe it would be inappropriate for me to make any commitment with respect to the declassification of any government records without having first consulted with appropriate officials within the Department of Justice as well as with other relevant authorities in other affected agencies.

6. It has been widely reported that the Trump Administration plans to continue the Biden Administration's efforts to secure a normalization agreement between Israel and Saudi Arabia. I have advocated that any such agreement that garners support from the United States should include a resolution to the 9/11 families claims against the Kingdom.

- a. If confirmed, will you commit to working with me to advocate for such a resolution in the course of these negotiations?

**RESPONSE:** I believe that the families of the victims of the attacks on September 11 deserve justice. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how this can best be achieved.

7. The Ending Forced Arbitration for Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Act was recently enacted into law in order to restore the rights of sexual assault and harassment survivors to file their cases in court rather than be subject to forced arbitration clauses. I was heartened to see that you led a letter of support on behalf of the National Association of Attorneys General for this legislation.

Sen. Hawley and I lead a new bill to expand the scope of that law to also restore rights for human trafficking victims. In reviewing your letter on the sexual assault and harassment issue, I was struck by how each and every argument you made in applies with equal force to the claims of



trafficking victims. In my view, restoring the rights of trafficking victims to have their day in court is a logical and worthwhile next step.

- a. Do you support the Senate Judiciary Committee acting this Congress to enact legislation to bar forced arbitration of human trafficking claims?

**RESPONSE:** As I stated in my hearing, and as evidenced by my tenure as Florida's Attorney General, fighting human trafficking is an issue to which I bring considerable experience. If confirmed, I would welcome the chance to work with the Committee further on this issue.

8. In 2022, the Department of Justice secured the surrender of more than 4,000 neglected and mistreated beagles from a breeding facility, Envigo, and subsequently \$35 million in payments for violations of the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) – the largest fine in history for an AWA case. Before DOJ stepped in, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) repeatedly recorded animal suffering at the facility but failed to act. These repeated instances of failure to fully enforce the Animal Welfare Act are troubling.

- a. Will you commit that the DOJ will use its authority under the Animal Welfare Act to hold violators accountable?

**RESPONSE:** I will fully and faithfully enforce the provisions of the Animal Welfare Act.

- b. Will you ensure that the DOJ Environmental and Natural Resources Division (ENRD) has sufficient resources, including staff, to effectively follow through with these cases and hold animal abusers accountable for their crimes?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will consult with ENRD officials regarding the Division's resources and staffing needs in order to enforce the laws under its purview.

- c. Will you review my bipartisan bill with Senator Kennedy, the Better CARE for Animals Act, designed to provide DOJ with more enforcement tools under the Animal Welfare Act?

**RESPONSE:** I look forward to, and welcome, the opportunity to review all legislative initiatives to combat animal abuse and cruelty.

9. For more than four years, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) has been criminally prosecuting The Boeing Company for lying to the FAA about the safety of the 737 MAX aircraft. In December, the federal district judge presiding over the criminal prosecution brought by the DOJ against Boeing rejected the proposed plea agreement, citing concerns raised by the family members representing the victims of the crashes. The judge asked the DOJ to respond by February 16 to give the incoming administration to consider the case.

a. Four years ago, Attorney General Garland met with the victims' families about the case. If confirmed, will you commit to meet with the victims' families about how to best handle this prosecution as it moves forward?

**RESPONSE:** While it would be inappropriate for me to comment on pending litigation or on any particular case, my time as a prosecutor and as Florida's Attorney General has been marked by a commitment to serving victims. If confirmed, I will actively seek justice for those harmed by those who would violate the laws of the United States.

b. If confirmed, do you commit to directing the DOJ to seek the maximum appropriate punishment permitted by law against Boeing for the 737 MAX crashes and subsequent safety incidents, including the January 2024 blowout of a door plug on a 737 MAX operated by Alaska Airlines?

**RESPONSE:** It would be inappropriate for me to comment on a prospective prosecution.

10. Machine gun conversion devices, also known as "Glock switches" and "auto sears," are devices about the size of a quarter that can be easily fitted onto handguns to convert them into fully automatic machine guns. When converted, the resulting weapons are capable of firing up to 1,200 rounds per minute.

These devices are already illegal under federal law but they are increasingly prevalent and are wreaking havoc in communities across the country. According to ATF, 5,454 guns with conversion devices were seized at crime scenes between 2017 and 2021, a 570% increase over the prior five-year period. And, a University of Chicago study last year identified conversion devices as a key factor in driving a significant increase in the lethality of shootings in Chicago—leading to more than 180 additional fatalities that would have otherwise occurred had lethality remained constant.

In September 2024, the Department identified and seized over 350 website domains that were being used to illegally import conversion devices from China. While an important step, absent continued focus and enforcement activity, new websites will pop up and the pipeline of these deadly devices will reopen.

a. If confirmed, will you commit to continuing to prioritize this kind of enforcement activity to keep these illegal devices off our streets?

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, I will consult with appropriate officials within the Department to discuss the matter further. I will enforce the laws regarding automatic weapons in accordance with the facts and the law.

11. Bump stocks are attachments that enable semi-automatic weapons to fire at the same rate as machine guns—between 400 and 800 rounds per minute. After one of these devices was used to commit the senseless and tragic attack in Las Vegas in 2017, the Trump Administration directed the ATF to develop a rule to ban bump stocks. This rule went into effect in March 2019, but the Supreme Court has since ruled that the rule exceeded the ATF's statutory authority.

- a. If confirmed, will you support legislation to codify the Trump Administration rule that would have removed bump stocks from our streets?

**RESPONSE:** I believe it would be inappropriate to commit at this time to a position with respect to proposed legislation to ban bump stocks. If I am confirmed and called upon to provide my position, I will do so only after careful consideration and consultation with appropriate officials within the Department of Justice.

12. Federal law requires licensed importers and manufacturers of firearms to “identify by means of a serial number engraved or cast on the receiver or frame of the weapon . . . each firearm imported or manufactured by such importer or manufacturer.” Federal, state, and local law enforcement use these serial numbers to trace firearms recovered at crime scenes. Firearms that lack serial numbers, which can be constructed out of parts, from kits, or even 3D-printed, are considered to be untraceable.

Between 2017 and 2023, law enforcement recovered 92,702 untraceable firearms, with a 44% increase in recoveries in 2022 and 2023 over the prior five years.

- a. Please describe your familiarity and/or experience with untraceable firearms.

**RESPONSE:** As a career prosecutor for 18 years and Florida's Attorney General for eight years, I have experience with cases involving gun crimes, including ones involving untraceable firearms.

- b. Do you agree that untraceable firearms constitute a threat to public safety?
- i. If so, please describe the steps the Department of Justice will take under your leadership, if confirmed, to address this threat, and how the Department will support ongoing state and local law enforcement efforts to do the same.
- ii. If not, please explain why not.

**RESPONSE:** The ATF's 2022 Frame and Receiver Rule is currently before the Supreme Court in *VanDerStock v. Garland* (23-852). As the nominee for the Attorney General, it would be inappropriate for me to comment on matters implicated in ongoing litigation involving the Department of Justice.

13. In 2024, the Department of Justice issued a guide to the safe storage of firearms. The National Rifle Association and National Shooting Sports Federation both support safe storage of firearms. Twenty-six states, including Florida and Connecticut have enacted laws related to the storage of firearms in order to prevent unauthorized access by children and, in some cases, prohibited persons, as well as gun theft.

- a. Please describe your familiarity and/or experience safely and securely storing firearms.

**RESPONSE:** I have attended a gun safety course.

b. Do you agree that firearms should be stored safely and securely to prevent unauthorized access by children and prohibited persons, as well as gun theft?

**RESPONSE:** Yes.

i. If so, will you commit, if you are confirmed, to continue the Department's work to promote the safe and secure storage of firearms in order to prevent unauthorized access and theft?

ii. If not, please explain why not.

**RESPONSE:** As a career prosecutor for 18 years and Florida's Attorney General for eight years, I have not had occasion to consider the issue of the Justice Department's work regarding firearm storage. If confirmed, I will consult with relevant Justice Department personnel to learn more.

14. According to the intelligence community, Russia, China, and Iran engaged in sophisticated and brazen hacking and influence campaigns to interfere in the Presidential election. One Chinese hacking group – dubbed 'Salt Typhoon' – broke into several American phone companies to spy on political and government targets. The Wall Street Journal has reported that those targets include Vice President-elect Vance, Senate staff, and members of the Harris campaign. Similarly, Iranian hackers targeted both the Trump and Harris campaigns, and then sought to weaponize stolen campaign material against President-elect Trump.

By all accounts, our foreign adversaries believe that they can wiretap Presidential campaigns and interfere with our elections without repercussions.

a. If confirmed, how do you plan to respond to the Salt Typhoon attacks, and address this escalating threat of foreign interference and hacking in our elections?

**RESPONSE:** As I indicated at the hearing, I view such attacks as an existential threat. If confirmed I would welcome the opportunity to discuss the matter further with Members of Congress and appropriate officials within the Department of Justice so that we can fully address this danger.

15. Last May, the Justice Department, along with 30 state Attorneys General, filed an antitrust lawsuit against Live Nation/Ticketmaster. The DOJ has sought the breakup of Ticketmaster over its abuse of monopolistic power over performers, venues, and independent promoters in ways that harm competition. Fans, artists, venues, small promoters and many others will enjoy enormous benefits if the DOJ succeeds.

a. If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that the DOJ vigorously pursues its antitrust lawsuit against Ticketmaster and any other issues it finds in the live events market?

**RESPONSE:** As your question indicates, the Department's lawsuit against Ticketmaster is ongoing. Consistent with the past practice of nominees to serve as Attorney General, I believe it would be inappropriate for me to comment on ongoing litigation where the United States is party in interest.

16. In 2015, Congress established the U.S. Victims of State Sponsored Terrorism Fund, administered by the Department of Justice, to provide U.S. victims of state-sponsored terror with a means of collecting on the judgements they had been awarded in court cases against countries that provided support for terrorist actions that impacted U.S. citizens. Unfortunately, while the Fund initially provided some meaningful disbursements, subsequent compensation has become less frequent and generally much smaller in scale.

a. While it is encouraging that the Department is putting out a disbursement this year, can you commit, if confirmed, to working to ensure that the Fund is working in an optimal fashion in the future?

**RESPONSE:** When I was state prosecutor and Florida's Attorney General, I prioritized opportunities to serve the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged victims. If confirmed, I will seek to ensure that the Department effectively administers the programs Congress has charged us with, particularly those protecting victims.

17. Since the enactment of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act in 2009 and the Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act in 2021, the federal government has provided crucial support to state and local efforts to raise community awareness about hate crimes, improve law enforcement reporting of hate crimes data, provide robust and culturally-appropriate training for law enforcement, and ensure appropriate investigations and prosecutions of hate crimes. During this time of historically high rates of hate crimes – particularly those targeting the Jewish, Muslim, and Asian-American communities, as well as other minority and marginalized communities – this support remains vital to local efforts to effectively prevent and respond to bias and hate motivated attacks. The current funding, while important, is insufficient to address the rise in hate crimes in this country.

Organizations that track extremism in America, such as the Anti-Defamation League, have called for a fourfold increase in funding for grants to State, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies to conduct educational outreach and training on hate crimes and to investigate and prosecute hate crimes.

a. Given the rise in hate crimes in recent years, do you believe the current funding is adequate to address the increasing incidences of hate?

**RESPONSE:** I have not had occasion to study the particular issue of these funding levels. If I am confirmed, I will make all budgetary decisions and recommendations in

consultation with appropriate officials within the Department as well as with other relevant officials including the Office of Management and Budget.

b. Under your leadership if confirmed, how will the Department of Justice work with State, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies to update their training programs to reflect and address the surge in hate crimes?

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to meet with appropriate Department of Justice employees and discuss what steps, if any, the Department can take to update training programs to prevent and respond to hate crimes.

c. Historically, the Department has also conducted research on hate crime prevention to better understand the causes of hate crimes and needs of victims. If confirmed, will you continue and support this research?

**RESPONSE:** I am not specifically familiar with the Department's hate crime prevention research. I will note that the Office of the Florida Attorney General publishes (and did so when I was Florida's Attorney General) an annual "Report on Hate Crimes in Florida." Copies of these reports from 2010 to 2017 were supplied to the Committee in response to the Public Questionnaire.

18. After serving as Florida's Attorney General, you joined Ballard Partners as a registered lobbyist and chaired the firm's Corporate Regulatory Compliance practice. During that time, you were registered to lobby for Amazon and Uber.

a. Please describe the matters that you lobbied or consulted for Amazon and Uber regarding.

**RESPONSE:** I served as an advocate for Amazon and Uber with respect to matters of public concern and potential government action.

b. Did you advise Amazon or its outside counsel on any matters related to antitrust legislation, litigation, compliance, oversight, or investigations, including the House of Representative's investigation into competition in tech markets?

**RESPONSE:** No, I did not.

c. Did you advise Amazon or its outside counsel on any matters related to the Federal Trade Commission's investigation and enforcement actions against Amazon over unpaid tips to Amazon Flex Drivers, potential violations of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, or consumer protection issues related to registration and cancelation of Amazon Prime subscriptions?

**RESPONSE:** No, I did not.

19. Ballard Partners is also registered to lobby for Google and its affiliates.

a. Did you advise Google or its outside counsel on any matters related to about legislation, litigation, compliance, oversight, or investigations? If so, please describe your role in such matters.

**RESPONSE:** I did not represent Google or its affiliates.

b. Did you advise Google or its outside counsel on any matters related to antitrust investigations or enforcement actions by the Department of Justice or state Attorneys General? If so, please describe your role in such matters.

**RESPONSE:** I did not represent Google or its affiliates.

20. Were you given a partnership stake or any financial stake in Ballard Partners? Do you still maintain any ownership or profit stake in the firm?

**RESPONSE:** During my employment with Ballard Partners, I was listed as a “partner” of the firm. I was not, however, a partner in the sense that I was an owner of the firm and I did not have a “partnership stake” in the firm. As set forth in materials submitted to this Committee in support of my nomination I participated in the firm’s profit-sharing plan.

21. Under the first Trump Administration and under the Biden Administration, the Antitrust Division has undertaken historic and overdue monopolization cases with respect to tech firms, in particular Google and Apple.

a. Under your leadership if confirmed, how will the Department of Justice oversee and continue those cases and, more generally, enforcement of our antitrust laws with respect to the abuse of market power by tech firms?

**RESPONSE:** As your question indicates, you are referring to ongoing cases at the Department of Justice. Consistent with the past practice of nominees to serve as Attorney General, I believe it would be inappropriate for me to comment on ongoing litigation where the United States is party in interest.

22. After the Presidential election, executives from several Big Tech firms facing antitrust enforcement actions, consumer protection investigations, or other regulatory actions — including matters involving the Department of Justice — have donated significant money to the incoming President’s inaugural fund and taken other steps to win favor with the incoming Administration.

a. What steps will you take, if confirmed, to insulate the Department of Justice from attempts by Big Tech to curtail or influence enforcement of the law?

**RESPONSE:** The Department’s investigative and prosecutorial decisions should be based on the facts, the applicable law and policies, the admissible evidence, and the Principles of Federal Prosecution (Justice Manual §9-27.000), and Department officials

should make these decisions free of bias or political influence. As I stated in my hearing, the Justice Department's number one job is to enforce the law fairly and evenhandedly.

23. There has been significant public and Congressional attention to the rapid growth of Artificial Intelligence technologies, including emerging issues related to consumer protection, public safety, civil rights, child exploitation, and competition.

a. If confirmed, what issues related to Artificial Intelligence will you prioritize at the Department of Justice?

**RESPONSE:** Artificial intelligence is an important and rapidly evolving issue. If confirmed I would welcome the opportunity to discuss the matter further with Members of Congress, appropriate officials within the Department of Justice, and experts in the scientific and technology community to help developed an informed set of priorities in this area.



**Senator Mazie Hirono  
Senate Judiciary Committee**

**Nominations Hearing | January 15, 2025  
Questions for the Record for Pamela Jo Bondi**

1. In *Korematsu v. United States*, 323 U.S. 214 (1944), the Supreme Court upheld the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

a. Is *Korematsu* still good law?

**RESPONSE:** No.

b. If the answer to part a of this question is anything other than “Yes” or “No,” please explain your understanding of the effect of the opinion in *Trump v. Hawaii*, 585 U.S. 667 (2018), on the continuing force of *Korematsu*.

c. If President Trump ordered you as Attorney General to detain a group of American citizens based on their race, would you do it?

(Note that the Supreme Court has explained that “[t]he forcible relocation of U.S. citizens to concentration camps, solely and explicitly on the basis of race, is objectively unlawful and outside the scope of Presidential authority.” *Hawaii*, 585 U.S. at 710. Thus, an order to that effect from any president would be illegal. Any answer by you that does not include a statement that you would refuse such an order will be construed as an admission that you would follow an illegal order.)

**RESPONSE:** I do not expect that President Trump would issue such an order.

d. If your answer to part c of this question is anything other than “Yes” or “No,” please explain your view of how Attorney General Francis Biddle should have responded when President Roosevelt asked him for his legal opinion on interning Japanese Americans.

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 1(c) above.

2. Do you agree that America is a country built by immigrants?

Since the time of the Founding, immigrants have played an important role in building our country. We also of course need to enforce our immigration laws, including those precluding unlawful entry.

3. Do you believe women are discriminated against in the United States?

**RESPONSE:** As with other Americans, women can be subject to discrimination.

**4. What is your view of the “Me Too” movement?**

**RESPONSE:** No one should be subjected to predatory sexual behavior or unwanted sexual advances. As a prosecutor, I worked to protect all people from this type of behavior.

**5. What do you think the role of the Department of Justice should be in ensuring equal opportunity for women and harassment-free workplaces?**

**RESPONSE:** The Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice has the primary responsibility within the Department of Justice for enforcing federal laws that support equal opportunity for women and harassment-free workplaces. If I am confirmed, the Department will enforce the law.

Moreover, though not directly contemplated by your question, if I am confirmed, I will not tolerate harassment within the Department. Incidents of harassment will be taken seriously, and harassers will be subject to discipline including, where appropriate, dismissal.

**6. The Department of Justice is responsible for enforcing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).**

**a. Do you support any restrictions on the ADA’s protections?**

**RESPONSE:** I am not aware of any proposed amendments to the ADA (including limits or restrictions on its protections) and I have never suggested any.

**b. Do you believe the ADA goes too far in protecting the rights of people with disabilities?**

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will vigorously enforce all federal civil rights laws enacted by Congress, including the ADA.

**c. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you permit and encourage the Disability Rights Section of the Civil Rights Division to robustly enforce the ADA?**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 6(b) above.

**7. Is there a constitutional right to interstate travel?**

**RESPONSE:** In *Saenz v. Roe*, 526 U.S. 489 (1999), the Supreme Court held that “the right to go from one place to another, including the right to cross state borders while en route . . . was vindicated in *Edwards v. California*, 314 U.S. 160 (1941) . . . [and] reaffirmed . . . in *United States v. Guest*, 383 U.S. 745 (1966).”

**8. If congress or a state legislature passed a law which unconstitutionally interfered with a right to interstate travel, would the Department of Justice take action to protect the right to interstate travel? If not, why not?**

**RESPONSE:** In every case when determining whether the Department of Justice would defend the constitutionality of a federal law or challenge the constitutionality of a state law, I would consult with appropriate officials within the Department including the Solicitor General, evaluate the text of the law at issue, and consider the relevant precedents of the Supreme Court.

**9. Is the Comstock Act still good law?**

**RESPONSE:** I have not had occasion to study the Comstock Act or related case law. If I am confirmed, decisions with respect to the applicability of any federal law will be made only after careful consideration of the relevant facts and law.

**a. If so, which portions of the Act remain in effect?**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 9.

**b. Please explain the legal basis for your answer(s) to part a of this question.**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 9.

**c. Please explain the effect, if any, of the Supreme Court's decisions in *Roth v. United States*, 354 U.S. 476 (1957), and *Griswold v. Connecticut*, 381 U.S. 479 (1965), on the continuing validity of the Comstock Act.**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 9.

**10.** In your brief for the State of Florida in *United States v. Secretary, Florida Department of Corrections*, 778 F.3d 1223 (11th Cir. 2015), you suggested that financial costs should be considered when determining whether the administration of a state program runs afoul of the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, which ensures that states and localities respect the First Amendment. **Please list all other constitutional rights which you believe can be restricted based on cost.**

**RESPONSE:** In the case that you cite, in my capacity as Attorney General, I represented the Florida Department of Corrections in defending a prison policy that was justified in part by the costs that a religious accommodation might impose on the State of Florida. That argument, which concerned a federal statute that Congress adopted to sweep beyond the First Amendment, did not concern the requirements of the U.S. Constitution itself.

**11.** You told Senator Padilla at your confirmation hearing that you would look further into the question of birthright citizenship and the Fourteenth Amendment. **Now that you have had sufficient time to locate a copy of the Fourteenth Amendment for review, in your view, is birthright citizenship guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution?**

**RESPONSE:** As I explained to Senator Padilla, I will this consider this question as necessary and appropriate and in consultation with officials within the Department of Justice.

**12. What are the limits on the President's power to make recess appointments?**

**RESPONSE:** The Supreme Court last addressed the scope of the recess appointment power in *NLRB v. Canning*, 573 U.S. 513 (2014). If I am confirmed as Attorney General, I may have occasion to provide advice to the President with respect to the scope of that power, and I would consult with appropriate officials at the Department of Justice, including the Solicitor General and the Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Legal Counsel.

**13. Should government policies that promote equal access to government contracts be treated the same as those which discriminate against certain racial groups?**

**RESPONSE:** Without reference to the details of any particular policy, I am able to provide an informed answer. That said, discrimination on the basis of race is personally abhorrent and if I am confirmed, the Department will continue to enforce laws related to racial discrimination.

**14.** As Attorney General of Florida, you defended the state's ban on same-sex marriage, arguing that it was in the state's interest to maintain the traditional definition of marriage. During your May 5, 2022, appearance on Fox News, you praised Florida's H.B. 1557, the Parental Rights in Education Act, commonly known as the "Don't Say Gay" law.

**a. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you adhere to the Supreme Court's holding in *Bostock v. Clayton County*, 590 U.S. 644 (2020)?**

**RESPONSE:** *Bostock v. Clayton County* is binding precedent of the Supreme Court entitled to respect as such.

**b. Under existing law, do transgender persons enjoy the same protection against discrimination in employment based on sex as all other persons?**

**RESPONSE:** Transgender persons are entitled to against discrimination in employment consistent with the Supreme Court's decision in *Bostock v. Clayton County*.

**c. If your answer to part b of this question is anything other than "Yes," please explain your view of the differences between the protection against discrimination in employment on the basis of sex enjoyed by transgender persons and all other persons.**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 14(b).

**15.** Police officers and other members of law enforcement play a vital role in keeping our communities safe. Unfortunately, some law enforcement agencies have been found to commit a pattern or practice of unlawful conduct. In some such cases, the Department of Justice has entered into a consent decree with the law enforcement agency at issue.

**a. What is the purpose of a consent decree between the Department of Justice and a law enforcement agency?**

**RESPONSE:** In any case, including cases involving the Department of Justice and law enforcement agencies, a consent decree is a mechanism whereby parties agree to a negotiated resolution of a case. In most cases, a consent decree involves supervision by the court, or a person appointed by the court, of certain prospective conditions set forth in the terms of the decree.

**b. In what cases are such law enforcement consent decrees typically sought?**

**RESPONSE:** Consent decrees involving law enforcement agencies are typically sought where the parties seek to set prospective conditions on the law enforcement agency.

**c. What is your opinion about the use of consent decrees as an approach to resolving unlawful conduct by law enforcement?**

**RESPONSE:** Consent decrees, as with other negotiated settlement arrangements, can be valuable.

**d. Do you believe consent decrees with law enforcement agencies are an effective tool for preventing misconduct and improving public safety?**

**RESPONSE:** Yes.

**e. In light of substantial empirical evidence showing that consent decrees have been an effective tool in addressing unlawful conduct by law enforcement, will you continue the Civil Rights Division's use of consent decrees as a remedy in pattern or practice investigations?**

**RESPONSE:** I have not reviewed the empirical evidence to which you are referring.

**f. Absent a clear showing that a law enforcement agency has actually achieved full compliance with specific provisions of a consent decree, will the Department of Justice under your leadership maintain and enforce its existing consent decree?**

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, I look forward to meeting with members of the Civil Rights Division and discussing how the Division can most effectively carry out its mission to protect and enforce the civil rights of all Americans, including through the use of consent decrees.

**g. What criteria will you use to determine whether to maintain and enforce existing law enforcement consent decrees?**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 15(f).

**h. Under what circumstances would you oppose entering into a consent decree after concluding that there had been a pattern or practice of unlawful conduct by a law enforcement agency?**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 15(f).

**16. President Trump has called for the release of the felons convicted of attacking the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, including those who harmed law enforcement officers. During the hearing, you said you would evaluate these issues on a "case-by-case basis." Please outline what criteria could weigh in favor of recommending a pardon during this case-by-case review.**

**RESPONSE:** In any case, including but not limited to cases arising out of the events of January 6, 2021, the decision to issue a pardon is a highly individualized determination that takes into account myriad factors. Depending on the facts and circumstances, the decision can take into account the seriousness of the crime, remorse expressed by the individual, any mitigating factors involved in the crime, harm to victims, evidence of rehabilitation, the nature and severity of the sentence imposed, and countless other factors.

**17. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, our country saw a dramatic increase in hate crimes and hate incidents against Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. In response to this increase, I sponsored the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, which congress passed and pursuant to which the Department of Justice issued a guidance document to raise awareness of hate crimes. Critically, the guidance also noted the increase in hate incidents: acts of hate that do not meet the statutory definition of a hate crime but may be illegal (for example, discrimination) or, even if not illegal, nevertheless target a person or entire community's race, religion, or other aspect of their identity. The guidance recognized the unique harms caused by all forms of hate, especially in a diverse and pluralistic country like ours, and the importance of raising awareness to report and respond to hate when it happens.**

**a. As a nominee to lead a department whose mission it is to keep our country safe and protect civil rights, do you agree with a definition of hate that encompasses both hate crimes and hate incidents? Why or why not?**

**RESPONSE:** I agree that not all acts of hate, while abhorrent, are crimes.

**b. What steps should the Department of Justice take to increase awareness of hate crimes and illegal discrimination and improve reporting of these acts, especially for communities facing cultural or language barriers to reporting?**

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to meet with appropriate officials within the Department of Justice and discuss what steps, if any, the Department can take to increase awareness of hate crimes and illegal discrimination and improve reporting of these acts.

c. Should the Department of Justice work to improve the reporting of hate crimes and illegal discrimination among communities that are especially vulnerable to hate, such as communities of color and immigrant communities? If so, how should it do so? If not, why not?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 17(b).

18. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you do anything to address increased hate incidents, in addition to hate crimes? If so, what? If not, why not?

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to meet with appropriate officials within the Department of Justice and discuss what steps, if any, the Department can take to address hate incidents.

19. The Language Access Coordinator at the Department of Justice leads DOJ's Language Access Program, chairs the Department's Language Access Working Group, and ensures the Department's adherence to language access obligations.

a. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you maintain the Language Access Coordinator position? If not, why not?

b. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you maintain the Language Access Working Group? If not, why not?

c. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you maintain the roles and responsibilities of both the Language Access Coordinator position and the Language Access Working Group? If not, why not?

**RESPONSE:** I am not familiar with the Language Access Coordinator, the Language Access Program, or the Language Access Working Group. If I am confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to learn more about their role within the Department of Justice.

20. Some states have a record of failing to submit sufficient hate crime data to the federal government. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you do anything to encourage these states to submit timely and complete data to the Department in order to better address these crimes? If so, what will you do? If not, why not?

**RESPONSE:** I have not had occasion to study the issue. I will note that the Office of the Florida Attorney General publishes (and did so when I was Florida's Attorney General) an annual "Report on Hate Crimes in Florida." Copies of these reports from 2010 to 2017 were supplied to the Committee in response to the Public Questionnaire.

21. Do you agree that credible hate crime reporting by large law enforcement agencies, or significant community prevention initiatives, should be a consideration in determining

**which agencies receive Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) funding? If not, why not?**

**RESPONSE:** I have not had occasion to study the issue.

**22.** So far, the Department of Justice's United Against Hate initiative (in which the 94 U.S. Attorneys conduct community-based public awareness programs and encouraged police agencies in their jurisdictions to participate in the FBI's hate crime data collection program) has been successful in educating the public on hate crimes. **If confirmed as Attorney General, will you continue the important leadership role U.S. Attorneys play in preventing and responding to hate violence in their communities? If not, why not?**

**RESPONSE:** I have not had occasion to study the specific issue you reference, but I agree that U.S. Attorneys can, and will if I am confirmed, play an important role in combating violent crime, including hate crimes.

**23.** The Native Hawaiian community is disproportionately impacted by sex trafficking. Native Hawaiian women and girls represent 67 percent of sex trafficking victims in Hawaii. **If confirmed as Attorney General, will you increase the number of federal prosecutors focused on this issue for communities that experience high levels of sex trafficking? If not, why not?**

**RESPONSE:** As I stated in my hearing, and as evidenced by my tenure as Florida's Attorney General, human trafficking, including sex trafficking is an issue to which I bring considerable experience. If I am confirmed, I can assure you that combatting trafficking in Hawaii and nationwide will be a top priority of the Department of Justice.

**24.** Native peoples, including Native Hawaiians and Alaska Natives, face disproportionately high rates of violence. **If confirmed as Attorney General, will you do anything to address the ongoing problem of missing and murdered indigenous people and the persistent violence endured by Native American families across the country? If so, what will you do? If not, why not?**

**RESPONSE:** Prior to my confirmation I met with Senator Lisa Murkowski and discussed this issue in depth. If I am confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity for the same conversation with you. I can further assure you that if I am confirmed, violent crime, including violent crime directed at Native Hawaiians will be a top priority of the Department of Justice.

**25.** Hawaii is one of only two states without a federal Residential Reentry Center (RRC, a/k/a, a halfway house). I am gravely concerned that the Federal Bureau of Prisons has yet to reopen an RRC in Hawaii since it closed its former facility in 2019. The lack of an RRC means that Hawaii residents who are in custody on the continental United States, and who may qualify for a reentry program, cannot come home and begin the reintegration process. It was encouraging to hear your support for halfway houses during your confirmation hearing.



a. **If confirmed as Attorney General, will you do everything in your power to reopen an RRC in Hawaii? If not, why not?**

b. **If confirmed as Attorney General, what will you do to encourage the Bureau of Prisons to reopen an RRC in Hawaii?**

**RESPONSE:** As you note, I spoke at length in my hearing on the critical need to reexamine and place greater emphasis on reentry programs. If I am confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss with you reopening a RRC in Hawaii.

26. During the first Trump Administration, then-Attorney General Sessions sought to condition receipt of federal funds under the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) Program—which provides hundreds of millions of dollars in vital funding annually to state and local law enforcement agencies—on cooperation with federal immigration enforcement.

As a legal matter, there was a circuit split on the legality of this move pending before the Supreme Court before it was mooted by the Biden Administration's rescission of the policy. As a policy matter, conflating local law enforcement and federal immigration enforcement makes communities less, not more, safe by damaging community trust and making it less likely for immigrants to report crimes, even when they are here legally.

a. **If you are confirmed as Attorney General, will federal grant applicants be required to cooperate with immigration enforcement as a condition of receiving funds under the Byrne JAG program?**

**RESPONSE:** As President Trump has repeatedly stated, immigration is one of the foremost priorities for this administration, because we need to fix our broken border and the problems that communities across the country face because of the recent introduction into the country millions of migrants. When I was Attorney General of the third largest state in the nation, I saw firsthand that a partnership between federal, state, and local law enforcement is important to the enforcement of criminal laws. I believe that Americans expect state and local governments to cooperate with the federal government in seeking to address the problems within their communities, and the Department of Justice will follow the law in administering its grant program for federal funds.

b. **If you are confirmed as Attorney General, will federal grant applicants for other grant programs administered by the Department of Justice be required to cooperate with immigration enforcement as a condition of receiving funds under those programs?**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 26(a) above.

c. **If the answer to part b of this question is anything other than “No,” please list the other programs you plan to condition or are considering conditioning on such cooperation.**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 26(a) above.

**d. Does any empirical evidence support the notion that requiring local law enforcement to cooperate with federal immigration enforcement as a condition of receiving critical public safety funds will make communities more, not less safe? If so, please provide citations to that evidence.**

**RESPONSE:** It seems self-evident to me that local law enforcement has an important role to play in making their communities safe from crime. As I explained at the hearing, it is imperative to make America safe again. Part of this includes through federal immigration enforcement, so that American communities do not continue to be ravaged by drugs such as fentanyl being trafficked across the border, and not terrorized by cartel and gang members who have walked into our country freely through the open border.

**e. If the answer to parts a of this question is yes, please provide your basis for concluding that imposing such conditions on Byrne JAG funds is legal.**

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed as Attorney General, I will review the Department's legal authorities and will follow the law in administering its grant program for federal funds.

**f. If the answer to part b of this question is anything other than no, please provide your basis for concluding that imposing such conditions on each of the programs listed in part c of this question is legal.**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 26(a) above.

**27. During the first Trump Administration, then-Attorney General Sessions launched the China Initiative, which purported to target economic espionage and intellectual property theft but ultimately failed to produce any significant convictions along these lines. Instead, the investigations under the initiative targeted Asian American researchers on the basis of their race and ancestry and accused them of unrelated issues like grant fraud. Ultimately, the China Initiative failed to make any real impact in reducing the very real threat of spying by the Chinese government and instead wasted critical national security resources. The racial profiling of Asian American researchers undermined the Asian American community's trust in the Department of Justice and resulted in a chilling effect on the U.S. scientific community. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you ensure that the Department of Justice's national security efforts do not result in the biased treatment of individuals based on their race, ethnicity, familial ties, or national origin?**

**RESPONSE:** I have not had occasion to study the China Initiative. If confirmed, I commit to upholding the law and respecting the rights of all individuals.

**28. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you take any steps to support and promote community-oriented policing? If so, what steps will you take? If not, why not?**

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, I look forward to meeting with members of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services to discuss how they can best serve the priorities of the Department of Justice including supporting local law enforcement.

29. The Department of Justice includes the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), which administers grants authorized by the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). VAWA protects and provides services to survivors of dating violence, domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking—four issues that impact people of all genders and sexual orientations. The law also prohibits discrimination on the “basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity..., sexual orientation, or disability” for “any program or activity” funded under the statute.

**a. Do you believe that VAWA’s protections should support LGBTQ survivors of dating, domestic, and sexual violence; and stalking, to the same extent that they support all other survivors? If not, why not?**

**RESPONSE:** It is my understanding that the grant programs administered by the Office on Violence Against Women aim to protect all victims of violence. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about this issue, the needs of victims, and the work of the Department to faithfully implement these programs.

**b. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you ensure that LGBTQ survivors of domestic violence are included and represented in the services of OVW? If so, how? If not, why not?**

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed as Attorney General, I will ensure that all programs administered by the Department, including those at OVW, are administered effectively and in accordance with their missions as enacted by Congress.

30. Surveys of law enforcement officials, court officials, legal service providers, and victim advocates have found that fear of immigration enforcement is a significant barrier for immigrant survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence to seek help from law enforcement and the legal system. The immigration provisions of the Violence Against Women Act address how the immigration process can be misused by bad actors to perpetrate abuse and maintain control over their victims. **If confirmed as Attorney General, will you take any steps to support access by non-citizen victims of domestic violence to VAWA’s protections? If so, what steps will you take? If not, why not?**

**RESPONSE:** As I explained at the hearing, I went to the border in Yuma, Arizona, a few months ago, and visited a rape crisis center. What I saw during my visit was horrible. An open border fuels these situations. If confirmed, I will use my experience as a prosecutor and state Attorney General to fight international cartels and to combat human trafficking.

31. On March 12, 2018, the Trump White House announced that “President Trump supports legislation and reforms to strengthen background checks and law enforcement operations.”

a. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you work to ensure that the records in the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) are as complete, accurate, and up-to-date as possible? If not, why not?

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, I will consult with appropriate officials within the Department of Justice to discuss how best to utilize NICS and other recordkeeping systems to aid law enforcement operations.

b. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you ensure that the Department of Justice's budget requests do not seek to reduce the number of FBI NICS Section personnel below current levels? If not, why not?

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, I will make budgetary decisions and recommendations in consultation with appropriate officials within the Department as well as with other relevant officials, including those in the Office of Management and Budget.

32. What is the purpose of Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act?

**RESPONSE:** As the Supreme Court recently explained, "Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act provides vital protection against discriminatory voting rules." *Brnovich v. DNC*, 594 U.S. 647, 678 (2021).

33. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you do anything to ensure that Americans' voting rights are not denied or abridged on account of race? If so, what? If not, why not?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I commit to enforcing the Voting Rights Act in a fair and impartial manner in order to protect the voting rights of all Americans.

34. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you investigate, evaluate, and review state laws that tend to hinder voter turnout in order to determine if they are, in fact, discriminatory?

a. If you will conduct such an investigation, evaluation, and review, will you bring Section 2 claims under the Voting Rights Act for any state laws that are determined to have a discriminatory impact or purpose? If not, why not?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 33 above.

b. If you will not conduct such an investigation, evaluation, and review, why not?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 33 above.

35. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you ask the Voting Rights Section of the Civil Rights Division to present to you all instances in which the Department of Justice has been asked to initiate Section 2 claims under the Voting Rights Act? If not, why not?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 33 above.

**36. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you work with congress to provide technical assistance on how to re-draft portions of the Voting Rights Act that have been struck down or undermined by the Supreme Court? If not, why not?**

**37. In *Adams v. Fulton County Board of Registration and Elections*, the America First Policy Institute (AFPI) sued on behalf of a local election official in Georgia to unilaterally delay or deny the certification of federal election results if she determined they contained irregularities.**

**a. What was your level of involvement in the *Adams* case?**

**RESPONSE:** At the time the lawsuit was filed I served as Chair of the AFPI's Center for Litigation and Co-Chair of Center for Law and Justice. As a consequence, oversight of this litigation, as generally with other cases in which the AFPI was involved, would have fallen under my purview.

**b. Why did AFPI, under your direction, bring this case given the clear precedent against it?**

**RESPONSE:** Without accepting your characterization, while I served as Chair of the AFPI's Center for Litigation and Co-Chair of Center for Law and Justice, the AFPI brought lawsuits, including the one you reference for several reasons and only after consultation with our client or clients. Decisions in every case were made after a careful evaluation of the relevant facts and applicable law.

**38. In 2010, you contributed \$500 to Bill McCollum's campaign for Florida Governor. As Florida Attorney General, Mr. McCollum defended Florida's ban on adoptions by same-sex couples, stating "I don't believe that the people who do this should be raising our children."**

**a. Were you aware of Mr. McCollum's views on the morality of same-sex adoption when you donated to his campaign?**

**RESPONSE:** I do not recall.

**b. At the time, did you agree with Mr. McCollum's position on the morality of same-sex couples adopting children?**

**RESPONSE:** No.

**39. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you do anything to ensure that non-English-speaking individuals appearing in immigration court can fully understand the proceedings in which they are participating? If so, what? If not, why not?**

**RESPONSE:** It is my understanding that the Immigration and Nationality Act and immigration regulations provide respondents in immigration court proceedings appropriate due process protections, and those procedures have been reviewed by the federal courts.

**40. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you subject immigration judges to quotas? If so, how will you ensure that these quotas do not prevent these judges from reviewing cases fully and fairly?**

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed as Attorney General, I will review existing procedures, consult with appropriate officials at the Department of Justice, and determine how to make the system fairer and more efficient. Immigration judges should decide particular cases before them on the facts and the law, not based on any other metric.

**41. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you, consistent with 5 C.F.R. 2635.502(c), follow the guidance of ethics officials on whether or not you should recuse yourself from matters in which you have an actual or perceived conflict of interest?**

**RESPONSE:** For matters that raise conflict of interest concerns, I will consult with the appropriate officials at the Department of Justice, including career ethics officials, and then make the appropriate decision.

**42. In your view, is it appropriate for the Attorney General to intervene in immigration cases in order to set policies that narrow the statutory asylum protections established by Congress?**

**RESPONSE:** Congress has vested in the Attorney General the authority to review the decisions of the Board of Immigration Appeals and to issue regulations implementing the Immigration and Nationality Act. If confirmed as Attorney General, I will ensure that the Department of Justice conducts its immigration responsibilities consistent with the laws established by Congress.

**43. If confirmed as Attorney General, if President Trump declares a national emergency based on a “crisis” at the southern border:**

- a. Will you defend such a declaration?**
- b. What would be the legal implications of such a declaration?**
- c. What would be the practical implications of such a declaration?**

**RESPONSE:** I think that we can all agree that there is a crisis at the southern border. During his first term, President Trump declared a national emergency that allowed his Administration to mobilize additional resources to building a wall at the southern border and directing additional resources and personnel. If I am confirmed as Attorney General, and the President seeks my opinion on whether to renew the national declaration of emergency, I would examine the law and the facts, consult with the appropriate Department of Justice officials, and advise the President of my recommendation.

**44.** Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) authorizes broad surveillance of foreigners outside the United States. Because Americans communicate with foreigners, this surveillance inevitably sweeps in large amounts of Americans' communications. To prevent Section 702 from being used as an end-run around the Fourth Amendment, congress required the government to minimize the retention and use of these "incidentally" collected communications and to certify annually that it is not using Section 702 to spy on Americans. Despite these mandates, the FBI routinely searches through the communications acquired under Section 702 for the express purpose of finding and accessing Americans' phone calls, text messages, and emails. It conducts tens of thousands of these "backdoor searches" each year.

**a.** What is your understanding of the Fourth Amendment's application to these "incidentally" collected communications?

**b.** Regardless of whether the Fourth Amendment applies, do you agree that a statutory or administrative probable cause requirement could be placed on these "backdoor searches?"

**c.** If confirmed as Attorney General, would you support reforming Section 702 to require some sort of probable cause finding in order to review Americans' communications?

**RESPONSE:** As a career prosecutor for 18 years and Florida's Attorney General for eight years, I have not had occasion to consider those issues. As I stated in my hearing, if confirmed, I will review these procedures, consult with appropriate officials at the Department, and formulate my views with respect to these issues.

**45.** If confirmed as Attorney General and facing a conflict between your duties to the Constitution and a request from the President, how will you resolve that conflict?

**Questions for the Record from Senator Alex Padilla  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
“Nomination of the Honorable Pamela Jo Bondi to be Attorney General of the United States”**

**January 15, 2025**

Questions for Ms. Pamela Bondi:

1. On January 13, you sent a letter to this Committee amending the information that you submitted in your Senate Judiciary Questionnaire (“SJQ”). Specifically, you noted that you had previously relied on information that your former lobbying firm, Ballard Partners, provided regarding your prior LDA and FARA registered work. Your letter noted that you did not, in fact, act as a foreign agent on behalf of the Foreign Minister of Zimbabwe or the Republic of Kosovo as you had previously reported.

**a. Did you take steps to verify the information that you submitted to this Committee in your SJQ, and, if the answer is yes, what steps did you take?**

**RESPONSE:** Yes. My SJQ was more than 200 pages long and included more than 3,000 attachments totaling more than 14,000 pages, and links to several hundred hours of video and audio recordings. I, and others acting on my behalf, reviewed my personal records, the records of others including former employers, commercially available electronic databases, and the Internet to provide this Committee with as comprehensive as possible as record of my career since graduating from college.

**b. In reviewing your SJQ in the days leading up to your confirmation hearing, did you discover any other inaccuracies? If so, what are they?**

**RESPONSE:** I placed great emphasis on making sure the answers to my SJQ were accurate and comprehensive and provided this Committee with the necessary information to carry out its responsibilities. I made corrections or added additional information as I became aware that such corrections or additional information were necessary. My understanding is that it is not uncommon for nominees, including nominees from the present Administration, to supplement or amend their SJQ. At every step of this process, I have been diligent in addressing questions regarding the SJQ raised by committee staff representing the Chairman and the Ranking Member.

**c. Can you now verify that the information that you have provided to this Committee in your SJQ is accurate and comprehensive?**

**RESPONSE:** I believe that the SJQ is accurate and comprehensive. I am confident that my SJQ provides this Committee with the necessary information to carry out its responsibilities with respect to my nomination.

**d. Did you complete your SJQ by yourself? If not, who assisted you and in what manner did they assist you?**



**RESPONSE:** At every step in this process, including the preparation of the SJQ, I have received invaluable assistance of individuals acting on my behalf who reviewed my personal records, the records of others including former employers, commercially available electronic databases, and the Internet, and also provided assistance with technical editing and other responsibilities.

2. As recently as October 2024, you were a registered lobbyist with Ballard Partners. You have also previously registered as a foreign agent while at Ballard Partners. In the course of this work, you have been paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to represent the interests of corporations, associations, and foreign entities to influence United States policy and the United States public. As Attorney General, you would serve a key role in setting this policy that you were once paid to influence.

**a. Will you commit to recusing yourself from all matters related to your lobbying work on behalf of the Florida Sheriffs Association and the Florida Sheriffs Risk Management Fund, including issues related to juvenile justice and officer wellness, as required by federal law?**

**RESPONSE:** In the event of a potential conflict of interest, including with respect to former clients, I will consult with the appropriate Department of Justice ethics officials and act consistent with governing regulations.

**b. In matters where you are required to recuse yourself, who will take on your role with respect to crafting Department of Justice policy and overseeing Department of Justice staff?**

**RESPONSE:** Generally speaking, the Deputy Attorney General is responsible in matters in which the Attorney General recuses herself.

**c. You reported that the State of Qatar paid you \$115,000 a month to work on issues related to human trafficking. What work did you do?**

**RESPONSE:** This statement is inaccurate. As I explained at my hearing, media reporting on my compensation suggested I received \$115,000 per month. To the extent that figure is accurate at all, it refers to compensation received by Ballard Partners and not by individuals within the firm. I was only one of several individuals within Ballard that represented the Government of Qatar.

**i. Which government actors, if any, did you meet with on behalf of the Qatari government?**

**RESPONSE:** I met with the Ambassador of Qatar to the United States. Beyond that, I have not retained personal records that would permit me to answer this question.

**ii. What materials did you prepare and to whom did you disseminate them?**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 2(c)(i) above.

3. As a former lobbyist, it will be incumbent upon you, working alongside the Department and the Office of Government Ethics, to ensure that you function free from any conflict of interest.

**a. Will you commit to recuse yourself from particular matters related to your former clients?**

**RESPONSE:** In the event of a potential conflict of interest, including with respect to former clients, I will consult with the appropriate Department of Justice ethics officials and act consistent with governing regulations.

**b. If yes, who will take your position with respect to matters from which you are recused?**

**RESPONSE:** As explained above with respect to Question 2(b), generally speaking, the Deputy Attorney General is responsible in matters in which the Attorney General recuses herself.

**c. If no, what steps will you take to ensure your impartiality on these matters, including ethical standards by which you will abide, protocols you will follow, and outside advice and guidance you will seek?**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 3(a) above.

4. The Department of Justice Civil Rights Division is responsible for enforcing federal voting and election administration legislation, including the Voting Rights Act and the National Voter Registration Act.

**a. Will you commit to not disturbing the organizational structure of the Civil Rights Division and Voting Rights Section as they currently stand?**

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed I will work to ensure that the Civil Rights Division continues its mission to fully and fairly enforce antidiscrimination and civil rights laws.

5. In 2021, the Department of Justice formed the Election Threats Task Force to “promptly and vigorously” prosecute offenders who threaten election workers. The Task Force opened over 100 investigations, charged 20 people, and secured 15 convictions.

**a. Will you commit to maintaining, and continuing the work of, the Election Threats Task Force?**

**b. What steps will you take to facilitate the Task Force’s work with state and county election officials?**

**RESPONSE:** I have not had occasion to study the Task Force's work. If I am confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to meet with appropriate interagency officials to discuss how best to ensure election integrity.

6. The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency ("CISA") provides crucial support to election offices across the country as they work to combat foreign threats to our election system. Election officials across my home state of California have had CISA conduct security reviews to boost their technical and physical security, particularly given the increase in threats against election offices that followed the 2020 election.

**a. Will you commit to continuing to work with CISA to protect and defend our elections, election systems, and election workers from foreign and domestic threats?**

**RESPONSE:** As I indicated at the hearing, I view foreign attacks on American institutions as an existential threat. If confirmed I would welcome the opportunity to discuss the matter further with Members of Congress and appropriate officials within the Department of Justice so that we can fully address this danger.

7. It's important to support the DOJ's Environmental and Natural Resources Division's work advancing public health and reducing environmental harms in overburdened and underserved communities. Too often, polluters have escaped accountability and left communities alone to bear the brunt of clean-up efforts and remedying health problems. In May 2022, the Department of Justice created the Office of Environmental Justice to serve as a central hub at the DOJ to coordinate and implement the department's work in the pursuit of environmental justice.

**a. Will you commit to maintaining, and continuing the work of, DOJ's Environmental and Natural Resource Division?**

**RESPONSE:** I will fully and faithfully enforce the Nation's laws protecting and preserving the environment and I look forward to meeting and working with officials within ENRD.

8. Most federal actions brought against businesses who commit environmental crimes end up resolved through settlement agreements, which can sometimes include something called Supplemental Environmental Projects, or SEPs. These SEPs are community projects that the violating company or individual would directly support the communities who were affected by their crimes. Examples of successful SEPs include things like new health clinics or expanding community air monitoring or school air filters.

**a. Will you commit to protecting the use of SEPs in settlement agreements?**

**RESPONSE:** I will fully and faithfully enforce the Nation's laws protecting and preserving the environment including, as necessary and appropriate, through various compliance and remedial mechanisms.

9. President Trump frequently sought to influence DOJ operations during his first term, including by urging the prosecution of his political opponents.

**a. How will you safeguard the Department from undue political influence to ensure public trust in its fairness?**

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will expect all employees to carry out their assigned responsibilities and report to appropriate ethics officials any interference with their responsibilities.

**b. What specific mechanisms would you implement to protect prosecutorial independence?**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 9(a) above.

**c. Can you describe instances in your career where you resisted political pressure?**

**RESPONSE:** Throughout my tenure as Florida Attorney General, I based my decisions on the law and not whether the decision would advantage or disadvantage me. I have spoken at length on my decision to defend Florida's 2008 marriage referendum, despite political pressure to the contrary, because it was a law enacted by more than 60% of Florida's voters and those voters deserved to have their vote respected.

**d. What would you do if asked to undertake illegal or unconstitutional actions?**

**RESPONSE:** As I stated repeatedly during my hearing, I would not have accepted the nomination to serve as Attorney General if I believed President Trump would ask me to do this.

**e. Will you commit to ensuring the DOJ does not engage in politically motivated investigations or prosecutions?**

**RESPONSE:** As I stated repeatedly at my hearing, if I am confirmed, there will be one tier of justice for all Americans. No one will be prosecuted on the basis of their political ideology.

**f. What criteria will guide your evaluation of DOJ employees, and under what circumstances would you consider terminations?**

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, Department of Justice employees will be evaluated according to their commitment to carry out the responsibilities of their office, their professionalism, integrity, and their willingness to enforce the law without fear or favor. I would also expect employees to conduct themselves according to all relevant workplace laws, rules, regulations, and policies. Employees can expect to be terminated, for among other reasons, if they abuse or misuse their office, commit malfeasance, or engage in criminal activities.

**g. Given your prior representation of President Trump and campaign contributions from entities he controlled, will you recuse yourself from matters involving him in a personal capacity?**

**RESPONSE:** In the event of a potential conflict of interest, I will consult with the appropriate Department of Justice ethics officials and act consistent with governing regulations.

10. The Department of Justice has long placed restrictions on the circumstances under which it can compel journalists engaged in newsgathering to disclose information about their activities. In 2022, the DOJ revised its policy memo to provide stronger protections for journalists. This policy aims to safeguard the press from law enforcement actions—whether criminal or civil—that could unduly hinder newsgathering. The DOJ recognizes “the important national interest in protecting journalists from compelled disclosure of information revealing their sources”—sources essential for informing the public about government operations.

**a. Will you commit to upholding this policy and ensuring it is not weakened?**

**b. If amendments to the policy are proposed, what principles would guide your decision-making?**

**c. How do you plan to balance national security concerns with protecting press freedoms?**

**RESPONSE:** I understand that there is an important balance to be struck between the freedom of the press and the government’s interests in protecting our national security, including state secrets. I do not have experience with the Department’s implementation of the policies in this area, but if I am confirmed as Attorney General, I will familiarize myself with the Department’s policies, consult with the appropriate officials on their experience, and come to a conclusion on the best way to balance these vitally important interests.

11. You previously worked as a lobbyist for Ballard Partners, representing a variety of domestic and foreign clients, including foreign governments such as Qatar and the Dominican Republic.

**a. How will you manage conflicts of interest arising from your past lobbying work, particularly when recusal may be necessary?**

**RESPONSE:** As an initial matter, I did not represent the Dominican Republic or any other foreign government other than the Government of Qatar. I provided to the Committee a letter from Ballard Partners explaining the inaccurate information provided to the Committee and I filed a corrected SJQ that addressed that issue. As the Government of Qatar or any other client, in the event of a potential conflict of interest, I will consult with the appropriate Department of Justice ethics officials and act consistent with governing regulations.

**b. Can you outline any interactions you had with U.S. government officials on behalf of foreign clients?**

**RESPONSE:** I, alongside others, provided limited advocacy of the Government of Qatar with respect to anti-human trafficking steps being taken by Qatar in advance of the Soccer World Cup that was held in that country in 2022.

**c. What steps will you take to ensure transparency and avoid perceptions of bias in DOJ decision-making?**

**RESPONSE:** In the event of a potential conflict of interest, including with respect to former clients, I will consult with the appropriate Department of Justice ethics officials and act consistent with governing regulations.

12. As Florida Attorney General, you took a strong stance against pill mills and synthetic drug use, but critics argued that your policies prioritized punitive measures over addressing the root causes of addiction.

**a. How will you balance enforcement with expanding access to evidence-based treatment and rehabilitation programs?**

**b. What specific policies would you pursue to reduce overcriminalization in drug-related offenses?**

**c. How would you promote diversion programs as alternatives to incarceration?**

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, I will work with law enforcement partners to enforce the law, reduce the availability of illicit drugs that cause addiction, and support treatment and recovery efforts to help addicted individuals overcome their addiction. I strongly believe we must break the cycle of recidivism. Diversion programs, such as drug courts, have proven to be effective solutions for some offenders. Drug programs in prisons and halfway houses programs are also essential tools. I have been a strong supporter of these measures, and I look forward to continuing to study these issues and press for reforms.

13. The January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol was a grave assault on democracy. Supporters of President Trump stormed the Capitol to disrupt the certification of the 2020 election results, resulting in deaths, injuries, and significant damage.

**a. Do you unequivocally condemn the violence at the Capitol on January 6, 2021?**

**RESPONSE:** I unequivocally condemn all violence.

**b. How would you ensure impartiality in prosecuting those involved in the attack?**

**RESPONSE:** In all cases brought by the Department of Justices, attorneys and others involved in criminal prosecutions will be expected to recuse themselves where a conflict of interest exists.

**c. What measures would you implement to restore public trust in the DOJ's handling of politically sensitive cases?**

**RESPONSE:** As I stated in my hearing, restoring public trust begins with a single tier of justice for all Americans and an end to the weaponization of the Department of Justice.

14. Gun violence remains a critical issue in the United States, with the DOJ playing a key role in enforcing federal gun laws and reducing firearm-related violence.

**a. What specific actions would you take as Attorney General to address the epidemic of gun violence in the United States, including illegal gun trafficking?**

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I am committed to enforcing federal gun laws as appropriate and in accordance with the relevant facts and law. As I stated at my hearing, if confirmed as the next Attorney General of the United States, my overriding objective will be to return the Department of Justice to its core mission of keeping Americans safe and vigorously prosecuting criminals.

**b. In the wake of the Parkland shooting, you expressed support for certain gun control measures in Florida, including raising the minimum age for firearm purchases and implementing red flag laws. Do you still support these measures, and do you support similar federal initiatives?**

**RESPONSE:** I believe it would be inappropriate to commit at this time to a position with respect to proposed federal legislation. If I am confirmed and called upon to provide my position, I will do so only after careful consideration and consultation with appropriate officials within the Department of Justice.

**c. Do you support implementing universal background checks for all gun purchases?**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 14(b) above.

**d. What actions will you take to close loopholes in federal gun laws and enforce universal background checks?**

**RESPONSE:** I am committed to enforcing existing federal gun laws as appropriate and in accordance with the relevant facts and law. I believe it would be inappropriate to commit at this time to a position with respect to any proposed federal legislation. If I am confirmed and called upon to provide my position on proposed legislation, I will do so only after careful consideration and consultation with appropriate officials within the Department of Justice.

**e. The ATF's Demand 2 Program has been instrumental in identifying gun dealers whose sales practices may contribute to the diversion of firearms into criminal activities. Do you commit to continuing this program, and if so, how will you ensure its effectiveness?**

**RESPONSE:** As a career prosecutor for 18 years and Florida's Attorney General for eight years, I have not had occasion to consider this ATF program. If I am confirmed, I will consult with appropriate officials within the Department regarding ATF's Demand 2 Program.

**f. Do you support federal funding for community-based violence intervention programs, and how would you measure their effectiveness?**

**RESPONSE:** I have not previously considered this question. If I am confirmed, I will consult with appropriate officials within the Department regarding federal funding for community-based violence intervention programs.

**g. In light of recent Supreme Court rulings expanding Second Amendment protections, how would you balance constitutional rights with public safety concerns?**

**RESPONSE:** It is the sworn duty of the Attorney General to support and defend the Constitution. I am committed to doing so and to enforcing existing federal gun laws in accordance with the relevant facts and law.

15. Organized retail crime threatens the safety of workers and consumers by funding other illicit activities. States like California have established task forces to address this issue.

**a. How will you enhance collaboration and information sharing between the DOJ and state and local law enforcement investigating organized retail crime rings?**

**RESPONSE:** It has been my long-held belief that collaboration between the Department of Justice and state and local law enforcement is absolutely essential to combatting crime, including organized retail crime rings. If I am confirmed, I look forward to discussing with appropriate officials within the Department of Justice how best to strengthen that collaboration and I welcome your input as well.

16. Congress requires accurate and up-to-date information before considering legislative action to schedule fentanyl-related substances or xylazine under the Controlled Substances Act.

**a. Do you commit to releasing the number and names of fentanyl-related substances the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has recognized as new analogues are identified?**

**b. Will you provide Congress with timely updates on the DEA's review and consideration of recommendations from the Department of Health and Human Services regarding the scheduling of xylazine?**



- c. What steps will you take to ensure a science-based approach to the scheduling of controlled substances, particularly with respect to emerging synthetic drugs like fentanyl analogues?**

**RESPONSE:** As I said during my hearing, the fentanyl crisis has devastated families and communities all across our country. I strongly support tackling this issue, and I look forward to working with Congress on this critically important task.

17. Naloxone is a critical tool for reversing opioid overdoses. The Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program funds naloxone distribution and education initiatives.

- a. Will you commit to supporting this program during your tenure as Attorney General?**
- b. What efforts will you undertake to distribute opioid antagonists like Naloxone to at-risk populations, including individuals recently released from incarceration?**
- c. How will you prioritize reducing overdose deaths in the United States?**

**RESPONSE:** As I discussed during my hearing, I take the problem of opioid and fentanyl overdoses extremely seriously. I understand that these overdoses are now the leading cause of death for Americans between the age of 18 and 45. The Department must have a comprehensive approach to combatting this epidemic. If confirmed, I will explore opportunities to support drug users looking to turn their lives around, as well as first responders assisting in saving lives destroyed by addiction.

18. Private prisons have been criticized for prioritizing profit over justice, raising concerns about potential conflicts of interest given your past lobbying for private prison companies.

- a. How will you ensure DOJ policies prioritize justice and public interest over private prison profitability?**
- b. Will you commit to recusing yourself from matters involving private prisons you previously represented?**
- c. How will you ensure transparency in DOJ contracts with private prison companies?**

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will consult as appropriate with Department officials to study the use and efficacy of private prisons in the federal system. Additionally, if a matter comes before me where I believe recusal might be warranted, I will review the facts, consult with career ethics officials at the Department, and will recuse myself whenever appropriate.

19. DOJ oversight mechanisms have faced scrutiny for failing to address abuses effectively. For example, the PREA audit at FCI Dublin failed to detect widespread sexual abuse.

**a. How will you strengthen oversight agreements to ensure meaningful and sustained reforms?**

**b. What changes would you make to improve the DOJ's monitoring protocols and prevent abuse in facilities under its oversight?**

**c. How will you hold auditors accountable for failing to identify abuses?**

**RESPONSE:** As I am not currently at the Department, I am not familiar with the details of staffing and supervision at the Bureau of Prisons, including FCI Dublin. If confirmed, I consult with Bureau officials regarding any needed reforms.

20. The DOJ has a critical role in protecting civil rights and ensuring fair elections.

**a. What steps will you take to combat voter suppression and ensure that all eligible citizens can vote securely?**

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will fully and fairly enforce federal laws prohibiting voter fraud and suppression.

**b. How will you prioritize resources for the Voting Rights Section and the Election Threats Task Force?**

**RESPONSE:** I have not had occasion to study this issue. If I am confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to meet with appropriate Voting Rights Section and Task Force members and employees to discuss proper resource allocation.

21. The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) provides crucial support to election offices nationwide to protect against foreign and domestic threats. However, Project 2025 proposes significant cuts to CISA's role.

**a. Will you commit to working with CISA to protect and defend elections, election systems, and election workers from cyber threats?**

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed as Attorney General, I commit to working with all appropriate federal partners to ensure our Nation's election integrity.

**b. How would you strengthen DOJ collaboration with CISA and other agencies to ensure election security?**

**RESPONSE:** I have not had occasion to study this issue. If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to meet with appropriate interagency officials to discuss the Department of Justice's role in a whole-of-government approach to election integrity.

**c. What steps would you take to address cyber threats targeting voter databases and other election infrastructure?**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 21(b) above.

22. As Florida Attorney General, you defended restrictive abortion laws, including mandatory waiting periods and parental consent requirements. You also supported stricter regulations on abortion clinics.

**a. If confirmed, would you advocate for similar restrictions at the federal level?**

**RESPONSE:** As Florida's Attorney General, I had a constitutional duty to defend the laws enacted by the representatives of the people of the State of Florida. If confirmed, I will enforce and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States.

**b. How will you ensure your personal views do not affect DOJ decisions on reproductive rights?**

**RESPONSE:** As I stated at my hearing, my personal beliefs will not influence my decisions if confirmed as Attorney General.

**c. Will you uphold the DOJ memorandum interpreting the Comstock Act to allow mailing of abortion medication?**

**RESPONSE:** I have not had the occasion to review any opinion on this subject. If I am confirmed, decisions with respect to the applicability of any federal law will be made only after careful consideration of the relevant facts and law.

23. Digital surveillance has raised significant privacy concerns, especially in the context of individuals seeking reproductive health care.

**a. What actions will you take to address digital surveillance issues impacting individuals accessing reproductive health services?**

**RESPONSE:** I have not had occasion to study these issues, but if confirmed, I will work to understand the Department of Justice's role in combatting surveillance abuses and follow the laws of the United States.

**b. How will you handle cases where state laws criminalizing reproductive health choices conflict with federal rights or protections?**

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, decisions with respect to the applicability of any federal law will be made only after careful consideration of the relevant facts and law.

**c. What measures will you implement to safeguard healthcare providers and patients from legal and physical threats related to reproductive services?**

**RESPONSE:** See my responses to Questions 23(a)-(c).

24. The Attorney General plays a central role in enforcing civil rights laws, including protections for same-sex marriage, non-discrimination statutes, and hate crime enforcement.

**a. You once described overturning Florida’s same-sex marriage ban as a “public harm.” Do you still hold this view?**

**RESPONSE:** As Florida’s Attorney General, I had a constitutional duty to defend the laws passed by the representatives of the people of the State of Florida. If confirmed, I pledge to uphold the Constitution and laws of the United States.

**b. How will you reconcile your previous opposition to same-sex marriage with your obligation to uphold *Obergefell v. Hodges* as binding precedent?**

**RESPONSE:** *Obergefell v. Hodges* is binding precedent of the Supreme Court entitled to respect as such.

**c. Will you commit to not pursuing or supporting litigation aimed at undermining the *Obergefell* decision?**

**RESPONSE:** See my answer to Question 24(b).

**d. How would you approach conflicts between federal non-discrimination laws and state religious freedom statutes?**

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will faithfully apply and uphold the laws of the United States, including those that prohibit discrimination.

**e. Do you support extending federal non-discrimination protections to include sexual orientation and gender identity?**

**RESPONSE:** Congress sets the scope of federal laws, including the various protections provided by federal civil rights laws. If confirmed, I will faithfully enforce the laws as Congress has enacted them.

**f. What measures would you take to ensure comprehensive enforcement of hate crime statutes and to address their underreporting?**

**RESPONSE:** As a former prosecutor and as Florida’s Attorney General I am well aware of the needs of accurate crime reporting data for law enforcement. If confirmed, I will work with the relevant offices of the Department of Justice to assess and support their ongoing efforts in this area.

**g. How will you balance respect for state sovereignty with the federal government’s responsibility to protect civil rights**

**RESPONSE:** As a former state attorney general, I have the utmost respect for state sovereignty within its sphere. If confirmed as Attorney General, I will enforce and defend the laws of the United States.

25. Affirmative action has been a key tool in addressing racial disparities in education and employment, but recent Supreme Court decisions have curtailed its use.

**a. How would you promote racial equity in education and employment without affirmative action?**

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will fully and fairly enforce the law, including antidiscrimination and civil rights laws in the areas of education and enforcement.

**b. What specific programs or initiatives would you advocate to address systemic disparities?**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 25(a) above.

**c. How will you measure the success of DOJ initiatives aimed at reducing discrimination?**

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 25(a) above.

26. Former President Trump’s infamous “Zero Tolerance” family separation policy was implemented in part by then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions. He issued a memo in 2017 directing U.S. Attorneys’ Offices along the Southwest border to prioritize the criminal prosecutions of migrant parents, knowing that this Department of Justice (DOJ) directive would lead to the separation of children from their families. The American Academy of Pediatrics considers the harms caused by family separation to be “consistent with torture.” And Zero Tolerance family separation led to the separation of thousands of children, including infants – many of whom remain separated from their families to this day.

**a. Do you agree that the Zero Tolerance family separation policy was cruel and harmful to children?**

**b. Will you commit to not reinstating any type of similar DOJ policy that would lead to the separation of families?**

**RESPONSE:** I do not have personal familiarity with the impact of the “Zero Tolerance” policy, which President Trump ended by executive order during his first Term. Of course, we should not have policies that encourage human traffickers to use and exploit children as a means of facilitating unlawful entry. To evaluate and render judgment on any policy, I would need to review the relevant information, including the policy, studies, data, information about its implementation, and any applicable law.

27. Following litigation by the ACLU, in which a judge enjoined the previous Trump Administration's Zero Tolerance Policy and ordered families to be reunited, the Biden Administration entered into a settlement agreement with a class of separated families. The settlement prohibits certain future separations and provides support for separated families.

**a. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you commit to honoring the terms of this settlement agreement?**

**b. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you pledge to continue to support the reunification efforts for families that remain separated?**

**RESPONSE:** I am not familiar with this particular case. If a federal court has imposed a consent decree upon the Department of Justice, then the Department will be obliged to comply with that injunction, subject to its right to seek modification, if circumstances require.

28. As part of his mass deportation policies, President-elect Trump reportedly plans to rescind the current policy in which ICE does not generally conduct immigration enforcement in sensitive locations like churches, schools, or hospitals. But as you may know, churches and other religious places of worship have had a rich history in this country of providing sanctuary to anyone who needed it. Churches and other religious dwellings have practiced the principle of providing shelter and safety to those persecuted for thousands of years. And we've always viewed this practice as a cornerstone of religion.

**a. Will the Department of Justice pursue prosecutions of church members, or members of other religious dwelling, if they permit a noncitizen to seek sanctuary within their religious dwelling?**

**RESPONSE:** ICE falls within the Department of Homeland Security, and I am not familiar with the ICE policy you describe. It is important to our country that we enforce our immigration laws and that we have one tier of justice. To the extent Department of Justice equities are involved, I will review the applicable laws and facts and consult as appropriate with officials within the Department.

**b. If confirmed as Attorney General, would you take steps to ensure that federal funding for jurisdictions is not withheld for states which seek to limit their cooperation in matters of immigration enforcement?**

**RESPONSE:** I know firsthand from my experience as Attorney General of the third largest state in the nation that it is important to have a partnership between the federal government and the states. I believe that Americans expect state and local governments to cooperate with the federal government in seeking to address the problems within their communities, and the Department of Justice will follow the law in administering its grant program for federal funds.

29. As we discussed during your Confirmation hearing, former President Trump has pledged to eliminate birthright citizenship by executive order upon taking office.

**a. What was the holding of the Supreme Court in *United States v. Wong Ark*?**

**RESPONSE:** The Supreme Court held that Wong Kim Ark was a United States citizen under the Fourteenth Amendment.

**b. Has that case been overturned?**

**RESPONSE:** No.

**c. What is the text of Citizenship Clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution?**

**RESPONSE:** "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside."

**d. Other than the children of diplomats, are there any children born in the United States that would not be citizens based on the Supreme Court's interpretation of the Citizenship Clause?**

**RESPONSE:** Yes. The Supreme Court identified other such categories in *Won Ark*.

30. In 1919 and 1920, the DOJ and FBI undertook an effort to deport and denaturalize suspected radicals and communists, which we now refer to as the "Palmer Raids." During these raids, led in part by J. Edgar Hoover, the DOJ and FBI deported and denaturalized American citizens from the United States.

**a. Do you believe that the Palmer Raid's efforts to deport American citizens was an example of unlawful government overreach?**

**RESPONSE:** I am not familiar with the litigation arising out of the Palmer Raids, but I believe that subsequent Supreme Court precedents also address the circumstances under which denaturalization is appropriate.

**b. If ordered to engage in such efforts, how would you respond as the nation's top law enforcement officer?**

**RESPONSE:** As I stated during the hearing, if confirmed as Attorney General, I would ensure that the Department complies with the law, and I would not implement any policy that I believe to be unlawful.

31. Do you believe that immigration courts are most efficient when judges are able to manage their own dockets and prioritize cases that should be continued or heard more expeditiously?

**RESPONSE:** To evaluate and render judgment on efficiency, I would need to review the relevant information, such as the current operations and policies, studies, data, and any applicable law.

32. Representation rates in immigration court have been low for years. According to EOIR data, just 44% of the 5.6 million people who appeared in immigration court between 2002-2022 had an attorney. And currently, out of more than two million immigrants with cases pending before the immigration courts, fewer than half have representation. These rates are even lower for immigrants in detention. However, attorneys have a significant impact in every stage of removal proceedings, such that – represented individuals are more likely to show up for their court cases and are significantly more likely to be successful in obtaining relief in immigration court. In fact, since 2001, EOIR data shows that only 6% of immigrants who were unrepresented were successful in winning their cases. And having an attorney makes detained individuals more than 10 times more likely to prevail.

**a. As a former prosecutor, can you please explain why it is important for individuals to have competent legal representation when appearing in court?**

**RESPONSE:** In criminal prosecutions, defendants have the right to competent legal counsel to safeguard their liberty and ensure due process.

**b. Do you believe that legal representation and orientation can help improve immigration court efficiency?**

**RESPONSE:** Under federal law, 8 U.S.C. § 1362, all respondents in removal proceedings have the right to counsel at no expense to the government.

**c. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you commit to maintaining the Legal Orientation and Immigration Court Help Desk Programs?**

**RESPONSE:** If this question arises before me for consideration, I will review the relevant information and consult as appropriate with officials within the Department of Justice.

33. **If confirmed, will you commit to uphold the United States' obligations under international and domestic law that prohibit the United States from returning refugees or asylum seekers to countries where they are substantially likely to suffer persecution and/or torture?**

**RESPONSE:** The Department of Justice will follow all applicable laws.

34. **If confirmed as Attorney General, you will oversee the administration of the Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the disbursement of the Youth Mentoring Grant.**



- a. **Ms. Bondi, do you support the continued funding of the Youth Mentoring Grant at its current funding level?**
- b. **If confirmed, will you commit to preserving and supporting funding for the National Mentoring Programs?**
- c. **If confirmed, will you commit to preserving and supporting funding for the Multistate Mentoring Program Initiative?**
- d. **If confirmed, will you commit to preserving and supporting funding for the Mentoring for Youth Affected by Opioid and Other Substance Misuse Program?**
- e. **If confirmed, will you commit to preserving and supporting funding for the National Mentoring Resource Center Continuation Program?**
- f. **If confirmed, will you commit to preserving and supporting funding for the Mentoring for Children of Incarcerated Parents Program?**

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, I will make budgetary decisions and recommendations in consultation with appropriate officials within the Department as well as with other relevant officials including those in the Office of Management and Budget.

35. In 2021, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) launched a comprehensive national initiative to prevent youth hate crimes and identity-based bullying. The initiative is a multipronged approach that seeks to increase awareness of youth hate crimes and bias-based bullying by looking into ways to identify best practices and evidence-based strategies to build protective factors in youth and help youth resist and disengage from extremist hate groups.

- a. **If confirmed, will you commit to preserving the Preventing Youth Hate Crimes & Bullying Initiative?**

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, I look forward to learning more about OJJDP and that initiative and how OJJDP can best serve the Department of Justice's priorities.

36. As head of the Department of Justice, you will oversee federal programs related to student civil rights, school safety, and funding for school police. Following the Parkland shooting in 2018, the Trump Administration's Federal Commission on School Safety recommended rescinding the 2014 school discipline guidance designed to address disparities in how students of color are disciplined compared to their white peers. The commission claimed the guidance "endangers student safety," despite a lack of evidence linking civil rights protections to school shootings.

- a. **Do you believe schools should continue to fulfill their legal obligation to administer discipline in a nondiscriminatory manner?**

**RESPONSE:** Yes.

**b. How will you ensure that schools develop and implement effective alternatives to exclusionary discipline practices?**

**RESPONSE:** I look forward to discussing federal programs related to student civil rights, school safety, and funding for school police with appropriate officials within the Department of Justice, and I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these vital issues with you as well.

37. Top intelligence experts identify domestic extremism, particularly attacks driven by racial or ethnic hatred, as one of the most pressing threats to the homeland. This includes the mass shootings in El Paso, Pittsburgh, and Buffalo, which were motivated by white nationalist and racially motivated ideologies.

**a. How will you address the growing threat of domestic extremism, including attacks by white nationalists and other racially or ethnically motivated extremists, to protect the American people?**

**RESPONSE:** Racist ideologies are abhorrent, and acts of racially or ethnically motivated violence should be appropriately investigated and prosecuted.

**Nomination of Pamela Jo Bondi to be Attorney General of the United States**  
**Questions for the Record**  
**Submitted January 16, 2025**

**QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER**

1. During the hearing on your nomination, I asked you about the following Department of Justice policies on prosecutorial and law enforcement practices, and you testified that you would read the policies and provide answers. Please read and review each of the memoranda and policies listed below and provide answers.

a. In May 2022, the Department issued a use of force policy<sup>1</sup> for its federal law enforcement components that was drafted in consultation with and approved by the heads of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives (ATF), Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and US Marshals Service (USMS). The policy was based on the 2020 *National Consensus Policy on Use of Force*, drafted by a coalition of eleven major law enforcement groups, including the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) and the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO). This policy is considered the best practice in law enforcement that protects law enforcement officers and citizens from dangerous interactions.

If you are confirmed as Attorney General, will you commit to continuing this Department policy to keep law enforcement officers and civilians safe?

**RESPONSE:** I believe it would be inappropriate for me to make any commitments with respect to this policy until I have had an opportunity, if I am confirmed, to discuss the policy with appropriate officials within the Department of Justice.

b. In September 2021, the Department issued a policy<sup>2</sup> to its law enforcement components that limited the use of chokeholds and carotid restraints to incidents when deadly force is authorized. At least 21 states, including Florida, and hundreds of law enforcement agencies have a similar policy. The Department policy also changed the standard for the use of no-knock entries during warrant executions to situations where there is an imminent threat of physical violence against an agent or another person, in large part because this practice is among the most dangerous for law enforcement officers. Many law enforcement agencies have adopted such a policy; Florida outlawed the use of non-knock entries in 1994.

If you are confirmed as Attorney General, will you commit to continuing this Department policy to keep law enforcement officers and civilians safe?

<sup>1</sup> *Memorandum: Department's Updated Use-of-Force Policy*, Off. of the Att'y Gen., U.S. Dep't of Justice (May 20, 2022), available at [https://www.justice.gov/d9/pages/attachments/2022/05/23/departments\\_updated\\_use-of-force\\_policy.pdf](https://www.justice.gov/d9/pages/attachments/2022/05/23/departments_updated_use-of-force_policy.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> *Memorandum: Chokeholds & Carotid Restraints; Knock & Announce Requirement*, Off. of the Deputy Att'y Gen., U.S. Dep't of Justice (Sept. 13, 2021), available at [https://www.justice.gov/d9/pages/attachments/2021/09/14/2021.09.13\\_chokehold\\_carotid\\_restraint\\_knock\\_and\\_announce\\_policy\\_final\\_0.pdf](https://www.justice.gov/d9/pages/attachments/2021/09/14/2021.09.13_chokehold_carotid_restraint_knock_and_announce_policy_final_0.pdf).

**RESPONSE:** I believe it would be inappropriate for me to make any commitments with respect to this policy until I have had an opportunity, if I am confirmed, to discuss the policy with appropriate officials within the Department of Justice.

2. The ATF, among other responsibilities, protects the public from crimes involving firearms. ATF is made up of more than 5,000 dedicated agents, inspectors, and other personnel, and has 25 field divisions across the United States. In recent years, there has been an increase in demand for ATF's expertise and resources, including support to ATF's state and local law enforcement partners. During the hearing on your nomination, you testified that you "will do everything in my power to prevent illegal gunrunners in our country."

a. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, how will you ensure that ATF has the funding, resources, and personnel needed to carry out its responsibilities and protect the public from "illegal gunrunning" and crimes involving firearms?

**RESPONSE:** As I stated at my hearing, if confirmed as the next Attorney General of the United States, my overriding objective will be to return the Department of Justice to its core mission of keeping Americans safe. With any resource and budgetary issues, I will consult with the relevant Department personnel.

3. The Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative (CVIPI) within the Department of Justice invests in community violence intervention programs throughout the nation, implementing evidence-based public safety strategies. Studies have shown that some of these programs have reduced violent crime in cities by an average of 30 percent and helped improve relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve.<sup>3</sup>

a. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, how will you ensure that the CVIPI receives continued funding to reduce rates of violence in our communities?

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to meet with appropriate employees within the Department of Justice to discuss the CVIPI and other efforts to help make communities across the country safer.

4. The Office for Access to Justice is a standalone agency within the Department that plans, develops, and coordinates implementation of access to justice policy initiatives. This Office works to ensure that the millions of people in the United States facing legal issues related to healthcare, housing, public benefits, employment, and more have access to the support they need to navigate a complex legal system. Last year, Chief Justice Nathan L. Hecht of the Supreme Court of Texas applauded the Office's work before the Senate Judiciary Committee, testifying

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<sup>3</sup> JOHN HOPKINS BLOOMBERG SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH, VIOLENCE REDUCTION COUNCILS: A COMMUNITY APPROACH TO SAVING LIVES 26 (2024), available at <https://americanhealth.jhu.edu/sites/default/files/2024-07/Violence-Reduction-Council-Toolkit-2024.pdf>.

that “[t]he U.S. Department of Justice, sometimes seen through partisan lenses, has established a distinctly nonpartisan and very effective Office for Access to Justice[.]”<sup>4</sup>

Just last week, the Office announced the launch of the Access to Justice Prize, a year-long competition that will support innovative ideas that focus on access to justice gaps faced by rural communities. This is essential, given that 77 percent of low-income rural households reported experiencing at least one civil legal issue in the previous year, but 94 percent reported receiving inadequate or no legal help with that issue.<sup>5</sup>

- a. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, how will you support and further develop the Office for Access to Justice’s important work?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will welcome the opportunity to meet with employees in the Office for Access to Justice to discuss how best to ensure fair outcomes for all, including for Americans living in rural communities.

5. The Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division (CRT) serves a critical role in enforcing federal laws that protect individuals from discrimination based on race, color, national origin, disability, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity), religion, familial status, and familial status. By enforcing the nation’s civil rights laws, educating the public on compliance, and working with other agencies to ensure uniform application of civil rights protections, CRT upholds the civil and constitutional rights of all people regardless of political affiliation in the United States.

- a. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, do you commit to protecting the rights of all Americans, even those whose political positions, lifestyles, identities, or beliefs you personally disagree with?

**RESPONSE:** Yes.

- b. In your view, how critical are the Civil Rights Division’s efforts in combating discrimination and upholding constitutional rights?

**RESPONSE:** The Civil Rights Division’s efforts in enforcing antidiscrimination and civil rights laws are a key part of the Department of Justice’s mission to uphold the rule of law.

- c. Are there particular initiatives or enforcement priorities that the Civil Rights Division has undertaken that you hope to further develop if confirmed?

<sup>4</sup> *Closing the Justice Gap: How to Make the Civil Justice System Accessible to All Americans Before the S. Comm. On the Judiciary, 118th Cong. (2024)* (statement of Hon. Nathan L. Hecht, Chief Justice, The Supreme Court of Texas), available at [https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2024-07-09 - testimony - hecht.pdf](https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2024-07-09%20-%20testimony%20-%20hecht.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Press Release, Dep’t of Justice, Justice Department Launches 2025 Access to Justice Prize to Address the Rural Justice Gap (Jan 7, 2025), available at <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-launches-2025-access-justice-prize-address-rural-justice-gap>.

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I plan to enforce antidiscrimination and civil rights laws equally for all Americans.

d. Are there particular initiatives or enforcement priorities that you would like the Civil Rights Division to undertake if confirmed?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 5(c) above.

e. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, how will you support and further develop the Civil Rights Division's important work?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to meet with appropriate Civil Rights Division employees and discuss what developments, if any, would be appropriate to further the Division's work.

6. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, how do you intend to proceed with the Civil Rights Division's current ongoing investigations into police misconduct?

**RESPONSE:** Consistent with the past practice of nominees to serve as Attorney General, I believe it would be inappropriate for me to comment on ongoing investigations.

7. During the hearing on your nomination, you assured the Committee that you would enforce the Voting Rights Act if confirmed.

a. What actions are you planning to take to enforce the Voting Rights Act?

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to meet with appropriate officials within the Department of Justice to discuss how to enforce the Voting Rights Act in a fair and impartial manner.

b. Would you pursue legal challenges to redistricting plans that deny voters an equal opportunity to participate in the political process even if the redistricting plans advantage Republican candidates?

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, I would enforce the Voting Rights Act in a fair and impartial manner, without regard to political affiliation.

c. Do you believe enforcement of the voting laws, as you pledged you would do in your testimony, includes enforcement of Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act?

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, I would enforce all sections of the Voting Rights Act in a fair and impartial manner.

8. Each year, federal data highlights thousands of hate crimes across the United States, reflecting individuals who are targeted through acts of violence or intimidation based on their race, religion, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation. The Department

of Justice is responsible for several important functions in preventing and addressing hate crimes: it prosecutes hate crimes; elevates hate crimes threat levels; expedites review of hate crimes; and enhances state, local, and tribal governments' law enforcement training.

- a. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, how will you ensure that the Department of Justice continues to carry out its responsibilities in preventing and addressing hate crimes?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will enforce the Nation's federal hate crimes laws, and work with state, local, and tribal law enforcement to protect *all* Americans from intimidation and violence.

9. There is an ongoing epidemic of violence directed at transgender people, particularly Black transgender women. In 2024, there are reports of at least 30 transgender people have been killed in the United States. Since 2013, 83 percent of transgender people killed were transgender women and 61 percent were Black transgender women.<sup>6</sup> Many of these murders are motivated by hate.

- a. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, what will you do to investigate and address this ongoing epidemic of hate violence for all groups, including transgender people?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will faithfully enforce and uphold the laws of the United States, including those that protect individuals against discrimination.

10. As you once stated, "Racism is alive and thriving in our state and country."<sup>7</sup> Studies have confirmed that Black people and other people of color fare worse when it comes to every metric: health, wealth, jobs, homeownership, and contacts with the criminal justice system.<sup>8</sup> Simultaneously it has been widely recognized by the business community that diversity in the

<sup>6</sup> See HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN FOUNDATION, THE EPIDEMIC OF VIOLENCE AGAINST THE TRANSGENDER & GENDER-EXPANSIVE COMMUNITY IN THE U.S., (Nov. 2024), <https://reports.hrc.org/an-epidemic-of-violence-2024#national-emergency>.

<sup>7</sup> Jim Turner, *Pam Bondi: 'Racism will not be tolerated'*, DAILY COMMERCIAL (Aug. 16, 2017), <https://www.dailycommercial.com/story/news/state/2017/08/16/pam-bondi-racism-will-not-be-tolerated/19595004007/>.

<sup>8</sup> See e.g., Mabinty Quarshie et al., *12 charts show how racial disparities persist across wealth, health, education and beyond*, USA TODAY (Jun. 18, 2020), <https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/2020/06/18/12-charts-racial-disparities-persist-across-wealth-health-and-beyond/3201129001/>; Sofia Carratala & Connor Maxwell, *Health Disparities by Race and Ethnicity*, THE CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS (May 7, 2020), <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/health-disparities-race-ethnicity/>; Ricardo Mimbela & Katie Duarte, *Visualizing the Racial Wealth Gap*, ACLU (Aug. 10, 2023), <https://www.aclu.org/news/racial-justice/visualizing-the-racial-wealth-gap>; Valerie Wilson et al., *Racial representation in professional occupations*, ECONOMIC POLICY INSTITUTE (Jun. 8, 2021), <https://www.epi.org/publication/racial-representation-prof-occ/>; *Racial Differences in Economic Security: Housing*, U.S. DEP'T OF TREASURY (Nov. 4, 2022), <https://home.treasury.gov/news/featured-stories/racial-differences-in-economic-security-housing>; *Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Criminal Justice System*, NCSL (May 24, 2022), <https://www.ncsl.org/civil-and-criminal-justice/racial-and-ethnic-disparities-in-the-criminal-justice-system>.



workplace brings about better outcomes.<sup>9</sup> Accordingly, the business community has sought to recruit diverse applicants. Schools have also sought to replicate these efforts.

There have been calls for the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division to investigate and prosecute these efforts by suing colleges and universities and businesses for discrimination against men and against white individuals.

- a. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, would the Department of Justice under your leadership spend resources investigating and prosecuting schools and businesses that seek to recruit talented and qualified applicants of diverse backgrounds, much like law enforcement and the military do?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will fully and fairly enforce the law, including antidiscrimination and civil rights laws. I look forward to meeting with officials within the Civil Rights Division to discuss how the Division can best carry out its mission.

11. The Department of Justice's Antitrust Division, in collaboration with the Federal Trade Commission, is tasked with enforcing the nation's antitrust laws. The Division has filed lawsuits, initiated investigations, and launched inquiries to promote competition and protect Americans.

- a. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, how will you approach antitrust enforcement?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I look forward to meeting with the Antitrust Division to make that determination.

- b. What specific areas do you believe warrant enforcement of antitrust laws?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 11(b).

12. Will you support the Antitrust Division in its mission to increase competition in the marketplace in order to reduce prices for Americans, protect our country's workforce, and support small businesses?

**RESPONSE:** Yes.

13. What steps will you take as Attorney General to ensure that the Antitrust Division has the resources and support from the Department to remain effective in its mission?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I look forward to tackling those questions.

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<sup>9</sup> See e.g., *Diversity matters even more: The case for holistic impact*, MCKINSEY & COMPANY (Dec 5, 2023), <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-matters-even-more-the-case-for-holistic-impact>.



14. In 2002, Attorney General John Ashcroft recused<sup>10</sup> himself from the Department of Justice's criminal investigation of Enron Corporation because he had accepted more than \$50,000 from the company and its chairman for his 2000 Senate campaign. In 2008, Attorney General Michael Mukasey recused<sup>11</sup> himself from the investigation of Iranian ownership of a Midtown Manhattan office building because he had previously represented the Alavi Foundation, the majority owner of the building, while in private practice. In 2009, Attorney General Eric Holder recused<sup>12</sup> himself from any role in the Department of Justice's decision whether to charge Major League Baseball pitcher Roger Clemens with lying to Congress because he had worked at a law firm that had Clemens as a client.

As a Partner at Ballard Partners, you lobbied on behalf of several corporate clients. Ballard Partners itself has numerous corporate clients.

a. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, how will you handle recusal from current or future Department of Justice investigations or enforcement actions involving your former clients?

**RESPONSE:** In the event of a potential conflict of interest, I will consult with the appropriate Department of Justice ethics officials and act consistent with governing regulations.

b. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, how will you handle recusal from current or future Department of Justice investigation or enforcement actions involving former or current clients of Ballard Partners?

**RESPONSE:** In the event of a potential conflict of interest, I will consult with the appropriate Department of Justice ethics officials and act consistent with governing regulations.

c. You testified that, if confirmed, you would consult with career Ethics and Professional Responsibility staff in the Department of Justice when making recusal decisions. Will you commit to following the counsel and advice of such staff in making recusal decisions?

**RESPONSE:** As you note, I stated I will consult with the appropriate Department of Justice ethics officials. However, I will own any recusal decision.

d. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, would you recuse yourself from cases that raise the appearance of a conflict of interest, even if informed by ethics and professional responsibility advisors that recusal is not warranted?

<sup>10</sup> David Johnston, *Enron's Collapse: The Investigation*, N.Y. TIMES (Jan. 16, 2002), <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/01/16/business/enron-s-collapse-investigation-justice-dept-s-inquiry-into-enron-beginning-take.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Glenn Kessler, *Mukasey Recuses Self in Probe of Building's Owner*, THE WASHINGTON POST (Dec. 19, 2008), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/12/18/AR2008121803549.html>.

<sup>12</sup> *Attorney General Recuses Himself in Clemens Probe*, THE WASHINGTON POST (March 12, 2009), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/11/AR2009031104310.html>.

**RESPONSE:** I will make all decisions with respect to potential recusal on a case-by-case basis. It may be that I decide recusal would be appropriate even where others advise me it is not necessary. As I state in response to Question 14 (c), I will own any recusal decision.

15. President Trump has said, “I have absolute right to do what I want to do with the Justice Department.”<sup>13</sup> Do you agree? If not absolute, how much power do you believe the President has over the Department?

**RESPONSE:** The President is bound by the terms of his oath, the Constitution, and applicable law.

16. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, how would you supervise people in the Department of Justice who have called for the investigation and prosecution of President Trump’s political opponents?

**RESPONSE:** Officials and employees within the Department of Justice will be expected to carry out their responsibilities regardless of their personal political views. As I stated at my hearing, if I am confirmed, no one will be prosecuted because of their political views. This applies as much to political opponents of the President as it does to his supporters. There will be one tier of justice for all Americans.

17. Would you agree with me that political violence is toxic to democracy, whether such violence comes from the left or the right?

**RESPONSE:** Political violence is never acceptable regardless of its source.

a. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, what actions will you take to address political violence in our country?

**RESPONSE:** As I stated in my hearing, if I am confirmed, prosecution of violent crime will be a top priority of the Department of Justice.

b. What actions would you take as Attorney General to address the violence against federal law enforcement officers like that witnessed during the January 6 United States Capitol attack?

**RESPONSE:** As I stated in my hearing, violence directed toward law enforcement officers is never acceptable. Without reference to any particular acts, if I am confirmed, the Department of Justice will vigorously prosecute cases of violence against law enforcement consistent with all relevant facts and the law.

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<sup>13</sup> Michael S. Schmidt & Michael D. Shear, *Trump Says Russia Inquiry Makes U.S. ‘Look Very Bad,’* N.Y. TIMES (Dec. 28, 2017), <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/28/us/politics/trump-interview-mueller-russia-china-north-korea.html>.

18. Communities of color have lower rates of confidence in law enforcement. A poll from 2023 indicated that 74 percent of white Americans had confidence in police, but only 64 percent of Hispanic Americans and 56 percent of Black Americans felt the same way.<sup>14</sup>

- a. If confirmed as Attorney General, what policies and practices will you implement to rebuild trust between law enforcement and communities of color?

**RESPONSE:** Trust between communities and law enforcement is critical to combating crime and keeping people safe. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department continues to implement policies and programs intended to enhance the trust between the police and the communities they serve.

19. According to a Brookings Institution study, Black Americans and white Americans use drugs at similar rates, yet Black Americans are 3.6 times more likely to be arrested for selling drugs and 2.5 times more likely to be arrested for possessing drugs than their white peers.<sup>15</sup> Notably, the same study found that whites are actually *more likely* than Black Americans to sell drugs.<sup>16</sup> These statistics are reflected in our nation's prisons and jails. Black Americans are roughly five times more likely than white Americans to be incarcerated in state prisons.<sup>17</sup> In my home state of New Jersey, "the rate of imprisonment among Black people is more than nine times" that of white Americans.<sup>18</sup>

- a. What would you attribute the statistics above to?

**RESPONSE:** I am not familiar with the Brookings Institution study you cite and have not had an opportunity to study the specific matter.

- b. As Attorney General, what would you do to address the disproportionate representation of people of color in our nation's jails and prisons?

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, I will consult with appropriate officials within the Department of Justice regarding this issue.

20. In recent years, there has been an increased effort in the law enforcement profession to recruit and train diverse officers. The Fraternal Order of Police, the country's largest police organization of sworn officers, cites diversity as an important part of running a successful law

<sup>14</sup> M.C. Brown II & Camille Lloyd, *Black Americans Less Confident, Satisfied With Local Police*, GALLUP (Sept. 18, 2023), <https://news.gallup.com/poll/511064/black-americans-less-confident-satisfied-local-police.aspx>.

<sup>15</sup> Jonathan Rothwell, *How the War on Drugs Damages Black Social Mobility*, BROOKINGS INST. (Sept. 30, 2014), <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/social-mobility-memos/2014/09/30/how-the-war-on-drugs-damages-black-social-mobility>.

<sup>16</sup> *Id.*

<sup>17</sup> Ashley Nellis, *Executive Summary: The Color of Justice: Racial and Ethnic Disparity in State Prisons*, SENTENCING PROJECT (Oct. 13, 2021), <http://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/color-of-justice-racial-and-ethnic-disparity-in-state-prisons>.

<sup>18</sup> ASHLEY NELLIS, THE COLOR OF JUSTICE: RACIAL AND ETHNIC DISPARITY IN STATE PRISONS, SENTENCING PROJECT 9 (2021), <https://www.sentencingproject.org/app/uploads/2022/08/The-Color-of-Justice-Racial-and-Ethnic-Disparity-in-State-Prisons.pdf>.

enforcement agency and that public confidence in law enforcement increases when their law enforcement agencies represent them.<sup>19</sup>

- a. Do you agree that it is an important goal for there to be demographic diversity among law enforcement personnel? Please explain your views.

**RESPONSE:** I believe diversity among law enforcement personnel can be positive and important. Efforts to achieve any diversity must be consistent with meritocracy, the Constitution, and other federal laws.

21. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, will you commit to fully implementing the requirements of the First Step Act?

- a. What actions would you take to fully implement the First Step Act?

**RESPONSE:** As I am not at the Department, I am not fully aware of the full set of actions the Department has taken to implement the First Step Act.

22. Central to the First Step Act is a system of earned time credits. This system allows people in prison to earn time out of prison by participating in rehabilitation programs that are designed to reduce recidivism. Concerningly, however, despite high demand, these programs are not widely available in the Bureau of Prisons. There are also reports that the Bureau of Prisons has been plagued with issues when calculating earned time credits, resulting in some people being incarcerated longer than their release date.

- a. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, what actions will you take to ensure that the Bureau of Prisons better implements this aspect of the First Step Act?
- b. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, what actions will you take to address resource issues, such as the unavailability of the Evidence-Based Recidivism Reduction (EBRR) programs required by the First Step Act?

**RESPONSE:** As I am not currently at the Department, I have not had the opportunity to study the operation of evidence-based recidivism reduction programs. If confirmed, I will carefully examine the issue and implement any appropriate reforms.

23. There is a well-documented staffing crisis<sup>20</sup> in the federal Bureau of Prisons that compounds challenges implementing the First Step Act and negatively affects correctional officers and incarcerated people alike.

<sup>19</sup> Mark McDonald, *Leveraging Diversity to Overcome Adversity with Robert Gaddy*, FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE (Aug. 31, 2022), <https://fop.net/2022/08/episode-29-diversity-robert-gaddy/>.

<sup>20</sup> *The Nation's Correctional Staffing Crisis: Assessing the Toll on Correctional Officers and Incarcerated Persons Before the Subcomm. On Crim. Justice and Counterterrorism of S. Comm. On the Judiciary*, 118th Cong. (2024), available at <https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/committee-activity/hearings/the-nations-correctional-staffing-crisis-assessing-the-toll-on-correctional-officers-and-incarcerated-persons>.

- a. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, what actions will you take to ensure that correctional officers in the Bureau of Prisons have fair pay, safe working conditions, and that incarcerated people have a safe, rehabilitative environment?
- b. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, how will you ensure the Bureau of Prisons has strong leadership and the resources it needs?

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, I will make budgetary decisions in consultation with appropriate official within the Department as well as with other relevant officials, including those in the Office of Management and Budget.

24. In 2020, Congress passed the bipartisan CARES Act, giving the Bureau of Prisons the ability to place low-risk individuals convicted of nonviolent offenses in home confinement during the “covered emergency period.” Attorney General Barr subsequently implemented this program. This marked the official inception of CARES Act home confinement, which would effectively serve as a large-scale experiment to test the feasibility of the expanded use of noncustodial sentences.

The CARES Act home confinement program has proven to be a successful, evidence-based, and cost-saving approach to safely reintegrate people into society without compromising public safety. The data collected since 2020 demonstrates its effectiveness. This program has not only saved taxpayers millions of dollars but has also alleviated the burden on correctional officers and prison staff. Moreover, it has enabled the reunification of thousands of families, empowered individuals serving sentences to actively pursue employment and education, and facilitated their meaningful contributions to our economy and community.

- a. Do you agree that the CARES Act home confinement program passed by Congress and signed by President Trump in 2020 has established the success of noncustodial sentences for low-risk individuals convicted of nonviolent offenses?
- b. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, would you support the extension of the CARES Act home confinement program?

**RESPONSE:** Because I am not currently at the Department, I am not familiar with the all aspects of the Department’s CARES Act implementation. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the CARES Act home confinement program and relevant data to assess possible reforms.

25. In October 2022, President Biden directed the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to launch a scientific review of how marijuana is scheduled under federal law. In May 2024, DOJ published a notice of proposed rulemaking to move cannabis from schedule I to schedule III under the Controlled Substances Act. That rulemaking process has been delayed and postponed to later this year.

- a. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, how will you work with the Drug Enforcement Administration to continue the rescheduling process and finalize a rule that

will reschedule cannabis from schedule I to schedule III under the Controlled Substances Act?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will give the matter careful consideration after consulting with appropriate Department officials.

26. In January 2018, former Attorney General Jeff Sessions revoked the President Obama-era Cole Memorandum, which had directed Department prosecutors to deprioritize enforcing federal cannabis laws concerning marijuana businesses in states that had legalized the drug for adult-use.

a. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, how will the Department of Justice under your leadership approach enforcement of federal cannabis laws? How would the independence of states to regulate marijuana factor into your decisions?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will give the matter careful consideration after consulting with appropriate Department officials.

27. Despite being illegal in every state, and despite a federal statute outlawing them even in the U.S. territories, cockfighting and dogfighting are still rampant.<sup>21</sup> Cockfights are hubs of violence and other illegal activities. Cockfighting also spreads diseases like avian influenza and virulent Newcastle Disease.

Criminal enterprises such as cockfighting, dogfighting, and narcotics trafficking generate profits for those involved, but come at a larger cost to societal well-being.<sup>22</sup> Gambling on cockfights is one of the ways cartels launder the money they make from narcotics trafficking and gunrunning, and it causes innocent people to get killed, including Americans.<sup>23</sup>

I lead a bill with Senator Kennedy called the FIGHT Act that would curb animal fighting through strengthened enforcement, by banning gambling on animal fights, stopping the shipment of mature roosters through the U.S. mail, and by allowing for the forfeiture of real property if it was used in the commission of an animal fighting crime. Last Congress, the FIGHT Act had 760 endorsers, including the National Sheriffs' Association, National District Attorneys Association, and 20 state sheriffs' associations. A House companion bill had more bipartisan support than any other animal welfare bill in Congress.

a. As Attorney General, will you join these leading law enforcement associations, agriculture, and animal welfare groups and endorse the FIGHT Act so we can break up the underworld criminal networks of animal fighters?

<sup>21</sup> Wayne Pacelle, *With a Moral Consensus Against Animal Fighting, Why Is It Still So Prevalent?*, Animal Wellness Action (Sept. 17, 2023), <https://animalwellnessaction.org/why-is-animal-fighting-still-so-prevalent>.

<sup>22</sup> *The facts about cockfighting*, The Humane Society, <https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/facts-about-cockfighting> (last visited Jan. 16, 2025).

<sup>23</sup> Press Release, Animal Wellness Action, *Leader of Sinaloa Cartel Murdered at Cockfight in Mexico* (Dec. 18, 2024), <https://animalwellnessaction.org/leader-of-sinaloa-cartel-murdered-at-cockfight-in-mexico>; Jennifer Sinco Kelleher, *Argument at large Hawaii cockfight led to deadly shooting*, ASSOCIATED PRESS (Apr. 21, 2023), <https://apnews.com/article/hawaii-cockfighting-shooting-death-9dbdf0e8affe4ff4197d72858a2ac2b7>.

**RESPONSE:** While it would be inappropriate for me to endorse any particular legislation without consulting appropriate officials within the Department of Justice, I look forward to working with you and other members of the Committee to curb animal abuse and cruelty.

b. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, would you consider creating an Animal Cruelty Crimes section within the Environment and Natural Resources Division to allow for more robust and strategic interdictions of animal fighting networks and other forms of malicious animal cruelty?

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, I will meet with the Environment and Natural Resources Division and I will discuss how best the Division can enforce laws related to animal abuse and cruelty.



**Senator Peter Welch**  
**Senate Judiciary Committee**  
**Written Questions for Pamela Bondi**  
**Hearing on “The Nomination of the Honorable Pamela Jo Bondi to be Attorney General of**  
**the United States”**  
**Wednesday, January 15, 2025**

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You reported on your Senate Judiciary Questionnaire that you worked as a consultant for CGI Merchant Group from 2021 to 2022.

1. What services did you provide to CGI Merchant?

**RESPONSE:** I provided consulting services.

2. Please detail any involvement you had with CGI Merchant’s purchase of the Trump International Hotel.

**RESPONSE:** I served as an advisor to CGI Merchant with respect to that transaction. I assisted with strategies for planning, executing, and finalizing the transaction.

According to your submitted materials and testimony, you lobbied on behalf of the Qatari Government in 2019 and 2020 ahead of the 2022 World Cup.

3. Please list your total compensation by the government of Qatar.

**RESPONSE:** As part of process for having my nomination considered by this Committee and the Senate, I provided the Committee a Statement of Net Worth and a completed OGE-278 form which provides considerable detail concerning my finances. Prior to submission of the OGE-278, I, and others acting on my behalf, discussed the contents of that form with the Director of the Department of Justice’s Departmental Ethics Office as well as staff of the Office of Government Ethics. I was also subject to a background investigation by the FBI and the report of its investigation was delivered to this Committee. Finally, I discussed in private my finances and other matters with staff for this Committee prior to my hearing. I refer you to the Statement of Net Worth, the OGE-278, and the FBI’s report on its background investigation with respect to my personal finances.

Further, I am not aware of a prior practice of this Committee that would require a nominee to a position within the Executive Branch to provide greater personal financial information than that discussed above particularly in response to a Question the answer to which will be made public as part of the record of my nomination.

I will note that media reporting on my compensation that suggest I received \$115,000 per month are grossly inaccurate. To the extent that figure is accurate at all, it refers to compensation received by Ballard Partners and not by individuals within the firm. I was only one of several individuals within Ballard that represented the Government of Qatar.



4. Please list all meetings with members of Congress or the Executive Branch you conducted on behalf of the government of Qatar and specific policies you advocated for, against, or to amend.

**RESPONSE:** I have not retained personal records related to my meetings on behalf of any client during my tenure with Ballard Partners. As I explained in my hearing, my work on behalf of the Government of Qatar related to anti-human trafficking efforts leading into the Soccer World Cup.

5. During your time lobbying on behalf of the government of Qatar, did the U.S. government alter any policy in any way regarding human trafficking or other matters for which you advocated?

**RESPONSE:** I lack sufficient information with respect to the present policies of the United States government necessary to answer this question.

You also reported you have provided lobbying services for, among other entities, Amazon, International Game Technology (IGT) Global Solutions, Uber, KGL Investment Company KSCC, and Geo Group.

6. Regarding Amazon:

a. Please list your total compensation by Amazon.

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 3 above.

b. Please list all meetings with members of Congress or the Executive Branch you conducted on behalf of Amazon and specific policies you advocated for, against, or to amend.

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 4 above.

c. During your time lobbying on behalf of Amazon, did the U.S. government alter any policy in any way regarding matters for which you advocated?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 5 above.

d. Do you have an ongoing relationship with Amazon or its affiliates?

**RESPONSE:** No.

7. Regarding IGT Global Solutions:

a. Please list your total compensation by IGT Global Solutions.

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 3 above.

b. Please list all meetings with members of Congress or the Executive Branch you conducted on behalf of IGT Global Solutions and specific policies you advocated for, against, or to amend.

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 4 above.

c. During your time lobbying on behalf of IGT Global Solutions, did the U.S. government alter any policy in any way regarding matters for which you advocated?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 5 above.

d. Do you have an ongoing relationship with IGT Global Solutions or its affiliates?

**RESPONSE:** No.

8. Regarding Uber:

a. Please list your total compensation by Uber.

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 3 above.

b. Please list all meetings with members of Congress or the Executive Branch you conducted on behalf of Uber and specific policies you advocated for, against, or to amend.

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 4 above.

c. During your time lobbying on behalf of Uber, did the U.S. government alter any policy in any way regarding matters for which you advocated?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 5 above.

d. Do you have an ongoing relationship with Uber or its affiliates?

**RESPONSE:** No.

9. Regarding KGL Investment Company KSCC:

a. Please list your total compensation by KGL Investment Company KSCC.

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 3 above.

b. Please list all meetings with members of Congress or the Executive Branch you conducted on behalf of KGL Investment Company KSCC and specific policies you advocated for, against, or to amend.

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 4 above.

c. During your time lobbying on behalf of KGL Investment Company KSCC, did the U.S. government alter any policy in any way regarding matters for which you advocated?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 5 above.

d. Do you have an ongoing relationship with KGL Investment Company KSCC or its affiliates?

**RESPONSE:** No.

10. Regarding Geo Group:

a. Please list your total compensation by Geo Group.

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 3 above.

b. Please list all meetings with members of Congress or the Executive Branch you conducted on behalf of Geo Group KSCC and specific policies you advocated for, against, or to amend.

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 4 above.

c. During your time lobbying on behalf of Geo Group, did the U.S. government alter any policy in any way regarding matters for which you advocated?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 5 above.

d. Do you have an ongoing relationship with Geo Group or its affiliates?

**RESPONSE:** No.

When you were Attorney General of Florida, your office declined to join a lawsuit against Trump University following your solicitation and acceptance of a \$25,000 donation from the Donald J. Trump Foundation to your Political Action Committee. The Internal Revenue Service later fined the Foundation for this donation.

11. While serving as the Florida Attorney General, who in your office made the decision not to join the lawsuit against Trump University?

**RESPONSE:** In 2017, the Florida Commission on Ethics followed the recommendation of the Commission's Advocate and determined that there was no probable cause to believe that I violated Florida law in soliciting and accepting a donation from President Trump. As set forth in

the report prepared by the Advocate and adopted by the Commission, Mark Hamilton, Special Counsel to Consumer Protection Unit made the decision with respect to whether the State of Florida would join the New York litigation involving Trump University.

12. How was the decision made within your office to decline joining the Trump University lawsuit?

**RESPONSE:** As set forth in the report prepared by the Advocate and adopted by the Commission on Ethics, Mark Hamilton, Special Counsel to Consumer Protection Unit made the decision in the normal course. As Mr. Hamilton stated in the report prepared by the Advocate, “I reviewed those complaints and she [Bondi] had nothing to do with them. The buck stops here.”

13. What procedures did you undertake as Florida Attorney General to ensure that your office’s decisions were not influenced by political or financial conflicts of interest?

**RESPONSE:** Protecting the Office’s decision-making so that it was free from improper influence began with hiring only officials with demonstrated track records for integrity and professionalism. Once hired, officials were expected to take seriously their oaths as members of the office and (if lawyers) as members of the Florida bar and recuse from matters where appropriate and solicit ethics guidance and advice as necessary. Officials were also expected to complete all required continuing education courses related to ethics training. I also empowered our ethics professionals to provide guidance and support where questions arose. Finally, protecting decision-making requires a strong example from the top. I took my oath seriously to enforce the law and disregard improper considerations when making decisions and let it be known that I expected the same conduct from all employees in my office.

14. What procedures would you take as Attorney General to ensure that the Department’s decisions would not be influenced by political or financial conflicts of interest?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will be committed to ensuring that all covered Department officials comply with the requirements of the financial disclosure reporting program. The Department’s investigative and prosecutorial decisions should be based on the facts, the applicable law and policies, the admissible evidence, and the Principles of Federal Prosecution (Justice Manual §9-27.000), and Department officials should make these decisions free of bias or political influence. As I stated in my hearing, the Justice Department’s number one job is to enforce the law fairly and evenhandedly. Politics will not play a part in my decisions, as I demonstrated during my career as a prosecutor and as the Attorney General of Florida.

On November 4, 2020, you appeared at a press conference for the Trump campaign at which you stated that then-President Trump had “won Pennsylvania” when over a million mail-in ballots had yet to be counted. Once they started to be counted, you stated in a November 5, 2020, appearance on Fox & Friends that “we do have evidence of cheating,” that “we are not going anywhere until they declare that we won Pennsylvania,” and described “fake ballots coming in late.”

15. Were the results 2020 Presidential election legitimate?

**RESPONSE:** As I explained at the hearing, I traveled to Pennsylvania as an advocate for the campaign in the days after election day. During that period, I saw a number of things that gave me concern about whether certain local officials were complying with the Commonwealth's election laws. I expressed those concerns in several public appearances based upon what I saw and upon other information that I was receiving at that time. Many Americans continue to share concerns about the integrity of the 2020 election. If confirmed as Attorney General, I will work to restore Americans' confidence in our electoral processes, and I hope that we are able to work together to do that.

16. On what basis did you conclude that the Trump campaign had "won Pennsylvania"?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 15 above.

17. When you initially asserted that there were "fake ballots coming in", what evidence did you have for that claim?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 15 above.

18. What did you mean when you stated that "ballots have been dumped"? Was this intended as a description of unlawful activity and, if so, what laws did you believe were broken?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 15 above.

19. What evidence did you have of voting by deceased individuals?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 15 above.

20. Do you stand by the above claims?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 15 above.

The Department of Justice is charged with enforcing the voting rights protections of the United States Constitution and federal law, including the Voting Rights Act. Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act prohibits states and localities from enacting laws or taking actions that have the result of denying or abridging the right to vote on the basis of race.

21. Do you believe Section 2 is constitutional? If not, please explain.

**RESPONSE:** As a career prosecutor in the State of Florida and as Florida's Attorney General, I have not had an occasion to consider the question. If I am confirmed and were the question to come before the Department of Justice, the question, as with all questions concerning the constitutionality of the federal statutes, will be addressed through multiple layers of review within the Department including, but not limited to, the Office of the Solicitor General. President Trump has stated that he will likely pardon "a large portion" of those who have been convicted of offenses related to the insurrection at the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021.

22. Do you recommend President Trump issue a blanket pardon for those convicted of offenses related to the insurrection at the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021?

**RESPONSE:** As I stated at my hearing, the pardon power belongs to the President. If I am asked to provide advice with respect to any potential pardons, I will do so on a case-by-case basis as I did as a member of the Florida Executive Clemency Board.

23. Do you support individual pardons if President Trump does not issue a blanket pardon?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 22 above.

24. Would you support individual pardons of those who were convicted of assaulting law enforcement officers?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 22 above.

Kash Patel described in his book that the next president should fire the top ranks of the FBI. Additionally, he included a list of 60 specific people he described as members of the “Executive Branch Deep State.” Mr. Patel also has said that he would “come after people in the media who lied about American citizens, who helped Joe Biden rig presidential elections.” President Trump nominated Mr. Patel to be Director of the FBI and he would report directly to you.

25. Do you believe that it would be appropriate for the incoming FBI Director to fire the top ranks of its leadership?

**RESPONSE:** I have not read Mr. Patel’s book and do not know the context for that statement.

26. Do you agree with Mr. Patel’s list of 60 members of the “Executive Branch Deep State”?

**RESPONSE:** I have not read Mr. Patel’s book and do not know the context for the list to which you refer.

27. Do you believe the FBI or the Department of Justice should go after “people in the media who lied about American citizens”?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 25.

28. Do you believe people in the media lied to help Joe Biden rig the 2020 election?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 25.

On October 23, 2023, you appeared on Newsmax’s *The Chris Salcedo Show* to discuss antisemitism. During that appearance, you called for deporting college students, regardless of whether they were a U.S. citizen, who protested against Israel.

29. How will you ensure that the Department of Justice under your leadership is not weaponized to infringe on the First Amendment rights of students and organizations engaged in pro-Palestinian human rights advocacy?

**RESPONSE:** As I stated during my confirmation hearing, if confirmed, I will fight every day to restore confidence and integrity to the Department of Justice and each of its components. There is no place for weaponization in the Department of Justice, an institution that was established to enforce the law and protect the constitutional rights of all Americans – including the rights set forth in the First Amendment.

On January 27, 2017, President Trump signed Executive Order 13769, which he described as a “Muslim ban.”

30. Would you advise the administration to impose or reinstate any form of a Muslim travel ban?

**RESPONSE:** President Trump did not impose a “Muslim travel ban” during his first term, but instead restricted travel to the United States from countries that would not, or could not, cooperate with our vetting procedures. The Supreme Court ultimately upheld the President’s authority in this area in *Trump v. Hawaii*, 585 U.S. 667 (2018). As I stated at my hearing before the Committee, if confirmed, my overriding objective will be to keep Americans safe. For any potential policy under consideration, I will review the applicable law and facts and consult as appropriate with officials within the Department of Justice and the Executive Branch.

31. Would you advise the administration to impose or reinstate any form of an Africa travel ban?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 30 above.

32. How would you balance national security considerations with constitutional protections regarding any potential travel ban?

**RESPONSE:** Both national security considerations and Americans’ constitutional rights are vitally important, and I believe that those interests can be reconciled. In connection with any potential policies, I would follow the law as required, with consultation as appropriate with officials within the Department of Justice and the Executive Branch.

The American Muslim community has had longstanding concerns about the discriminatory and unconstitutional nature of the terrorism watchlist.

33. What specific reforms will you pursue to ensure the terrorism watchlist is not used as a tool of discriminatory profiling?

**RESPONSE:** Terrorism watchlists should not be tools of unlawful profiling. I have not previously considered what, if any, reforms are necessary. If you have any specific reforms in mind, and if I am confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss such reforms with you.

34. What specific reforms will you pursue to ensure that individuals unfairly added are afforded robust due process protections?

**RESPONSE:** Individuals should be included on terrorism watchlists only when appropriate and consistent with the law. I have not previously considered what, if any, reforms are necessary to ensure individuals wrongly listed can be removed from such lists. If you have any specific reforms in mind, and if I am confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss such reforms with you.

During the 2024 campaign, President Trump stated on Truth Social, "I believe it is time to end needless arrests and incarcerations of adults for small amounts of marijuana for personal use. We must also implement smart regulations, while providing access for adults, to safe, tested product." In April 2024, the Biden Administration commenced a rescheduling process after the Department of Health and Human Services and Food and Drug Administration determined marijuana has "currently accepted medical uses." It has proposed moving marijuana to Schedule III of the Controlled Substances Act.

35. Do you support placing marijuana on Schedule III?

- a. If so, will you work to finalize rescheduling?
- b. If not, please explain.
- c. Do you support efforts to align federal and state marijuana laws?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will give the matter careful consideration after consulting with appropriate Department officials.

36. In what is known as the Cole memo, your predecessors have used prosecutorial discretion urging U.S. Attorneys to not prosecute low-level marijuana crimes and only go after major marijuana trafficking cases. Will you use your prosecutorial discretion authority in a similar manner?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will give the matter careful consideration after consulting with appropriate Department officials.

As Florida Attorney General, you joined 25 states in a brief seeking to invalidate the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean Power Plan. In 2022, the Supreme Court sided with the plaintiffs and restricted the EPA's authority under the Clean Air Act in *West Virginia v. EPA*. The EPA's most recent power plant emissions rules, finalized in April 2024, pursue a new regulatory framework to reduce air pollution within the constraints applied by the Supreme Court's ruling. This rule is projected to reduce emissions by 1.38 billion metric tons and result in up to \$370 billion in environmental and public health benefits over the next 20 years.



37. Will you commit to protecting Americans' public health and the environment from corporate polluters by preserving agencies' regulatory authority and our nation's bedrock environmental laws, including the National Environmental Policy Act, Clean Air Act, and Clean Water Act?

**RESPONSE:** I will fully and faithfully enforce the Nation's laws protecting and preserving the environment.

In September 2023, the Department of Energy (DOE) finalized a rule establishing energy conservation standards for consumer furnaces. Congress first established efficiency standards for these products and mandated their periodic review and revision under the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA). DOE determined that the amended standards would result in significant conservation of energy and are technologically feasible and economically justified. They are projected to save consumers \$1.5 billion annually and a cumulative \$24.8 billion on energy bills over 30 years. Several gas industry organizations and manufacturers have since challenged the final rule and presented oral arguments before the DC Circuit Court of Appeals in November 2024 (*AGA v. DOE*) seeking to overturn this rule.

38. Will you commit to defending DOE's factual findings regarding the technical feasibility and economic justification of the revised energy conservation standards for consumer furnaces and other products covered under EPCA?

**RESPONSE:** As your question indicates, the rule you are referring to is currently under consideration by the United States Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. Consistent with the past practice of nominees to serve as Attorney General, I believe it would be inappropriate for me to comment on ongoing litigation where the United States government is a party in interest.

Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) permits the government to collect communication of foreign persons located outside the United States. Agencies within the Intelligence Community can then query the collected communications. Communications of persons located in the United States, including U.S. citizens, are routinely incidentally collected as part of this process and queried by the Intelligence Community.

39. Do you support reauthorization of Section 702 of FISA as currently structured?

**RESPONSE:** Section 702 of FISA is an important tool that assists our national security professionals in keeping Americans safe. At the same time, it is important that the Department protect the civil liberties of Americans. As I stated at my hearing, if I am confirmed, I will look closely at the current structure of Section 702, consult with appropriate officials within the Department of Justice and formulate my view with respect to congressional reauthorization and amendment.

40. Would you support an amendment to Section 702 that requires the court to appoint at least one outside lawyer that has an expertise in privacy and civil liberties for every case, unless the Court finds that such qualifications are inappropriate in a particular case?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 39 above.

41. Would you support the adoption of accuracy procedures by the Attorney General that would ensure that all FISA applications are accurate and complete?

**RESPONSE:** I have not previously had the occasion to consider the question. If I am confirmed, I will consult with appropriate officials within the Department on what procedures, if any, are necessary to ensure the accuracy and completeness of FISA applications.

42. Would you support a requirement that, for all applications targeting U.S. persons, the federal officer filing the FISA application must include certification that the information collected and reviewed includes supporting documentation for each factual assertion contained in the application?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 39 above.

43. Would you support a warrant requirement before queries are performed for U.S. persons?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 39 above.

In 1986 Congress passed the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA) to address the crisis of patients being turned away from emergency rooms and denied emergency care. EMTALA provides straightforward protections—when any person experiencing an emergency medical condition seeks care at a Medicare-funded hospital, the hospital is required to offer necessary stabilizing treatment, regardless of the patient’s ability to pay. The reality is treatment sometimes includes emergency abortion care if that is the only treatment that can stabilize a pregnant patient.

44. If confirmed, will you commit to not prosecute physicians that perform life-saving abortions protected under EMTALA?

**RESPONSE:** If I am confirmed, any decisions regarding whether to charge cases under EMTALA will be based on a thorough analysis of the facts and the governing law.

Project 2025 has called for using the Comstock Act, an anti-vice law dating back to 1873, to criminalize the mailing of commonly used FDA-approved abortion-related materials and medications.

45. Do you believe the Comstock Act applies to these materials and/or medications?

**RESPONSE:** As an initial matter, I have not read or reviewed any materials published by, or on behalf of, Project 2025. With respect to your question, I have not previously considered the question. If I am confirmed, decisions with respect to the applicability of any federal law will be made only after careful consideration of the relevant facts and law.

46. For more than a century, federal courts have interpreted the Comstock Act to only apply to mailing of abortion-related materials and medications that are intended to be used for illegal purposes. Do you agree to abide by these rulings?

**RESPONSE:** I have not had the occasion to review the rulings on this subject. If I am confirmed, decisions with respect to the applicability of any federal law will be made only after careful consideration of the relevant facts and law.

47. In 2022, the Department of Justice released an opinion that the Comstock Act does not apply to the mailing of mifepristone or misoprostol when the sender lacks the requisite intent for the recipient to use the medications illegally. Do you agree with this opinion?

**RESPONSE:** I have not had the occasion to review any opinion on this subject. If I am confirmed, decisions with respect to the applicability of any federal law will be made only after careful consideration of the relevant facts and law.

In *Griswold v. Connecticut*, the Supreme Court recognized the right to privacy encompasses the right for married couples to use contraception. And in *Eisenstadt v. Baird*, the Supreme Court extended *Griswold*'s principle to unmarried couples.

48. Do you agree with these decisions? If not, please explain.

**RESPONSE:** *Griswold v. Connecticut* and *Eisenstadt v. Baird* are precedent of the Supreme Court and are entitled to respect as such.

In a March 2012 op-ed, you criticized HHS's contraceptive coverage mandate, writing, quote, "There is no ongoing attempt, by government or by anyone else, to deny women access to contraception. If there were such an effort, I would vigorously oppose it."

49. Do you still believe women have a right to contraception?

**RESPONSE:** I stand by the statement you quote.

50. If confirmed, would you vigorously oppose any effort to deny women access to contraception?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 49.

The Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act makes it a federal crime to use force, the threat of force, or physical obstruction to prevent individuals from obtaining or providing reproductive health care services. The FACE Act is not about abortions. This law protects all patients, providers, and facilities that provide reproductive health services, including pregnancy counseling services and any other pregnancy support facility providing reproductive health care.

51. If confirmed, will you continue to enforce the protections provided under the FACE Act?

**RESPONSE:** As with all matters, any decisions regarding whether to charge cases under the FACE Act will be based on a thorough analysis of the facts and the governing law.

**Questions for the Record**

Sen. Adam Schiff (CA)

1. Thank you for your comments at the hearing about the scourge of looting, price gouging, and other crimes that often take place after natural disasters. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, will you commit to protecting consumers by using the full power of the Justice Department to go after fraudulent disaster relief claims and any other instances of fraud related to the California wildfires?

**RESPONSE:** As with all matters, any decisions regarding whether to charge cases will be based on a thorough analysis of the relevant facts and the governing law.

2. Your opening statement included that “The Department of Justice must also return to defending the foundational rights of all Americans, including free speech, free exercise of religion, and the right to bear arms.” I’m curious that you selected two of the fundamental freedoms of the First Amendment but not the others for your opening statement. Just so that the record is complete, can you comment on the importance of defending the other freedoms enshrined in the First Amendment as well?

**RESPONSE:** My remarks were not meant to diminish the importance of the freedom of the press, the right to peaceably assemble, or the right to petition for redress. The Department of Justice was established to enforce the law and protect the constitutional rights of all Americans including all of the rights set forth in the First Amendment.

3. Former special counsel Jack Smith recently submitted his report to the Attorney General. AG Garland released to Congress and the public the first volume of that report, which concerns the 2020 presidential election and alleged misconduct by Mr. Trump. He has withheld the second volume of that report, which relates to the alleged mishandling of government-owned documents by Mr. Trump and others, pending the ongoing investigation and prosecution of two people involved in that conduct. I won’t ask you what you will do concerning those prosecutions. But will you commit to retaining and not destroying volume 2 of the report, particularly since at least one Freedom of Information Act request was made for it prior to the end of the Biden administration? Will you commit to releasing volume 2 of the report after the conclusion of the investigation and prosecution of two people involved in that conduct?

**RESPONSE:** As your question indicates, and based only on publicly available reports, it is my understanding that Volume 2 of Mr. Smith’s report relates to an ongoing investigation and prosecution. As a consequence, I believe it would be inappropriate for me to comment on this matter.

4. There was discussion on this during the hearing, but do you believe the role of special counsel to be constitutional?

**RESPONSE:** The constitutionality of special counsel appointments is the subject of ongoing litigation involving the Department. It would not be appropriate for me to comment on legal disputes in pending litigation involving the Department.

5. If you are confirmed as Attorney General, will you commit to making public non-classified OLC opinions issued while in office?

**RESPONSE:** I cannot make any commitments about disclosure of any existing opinions or hypothetical future opinions until I have had the opportunity to review such opinions. As a general matter, I would expect the Department to make decisions about publicly releasing OLC opinions in accordance with its longstanding, established practices.

6. Will you commit to devoting resources necessary to reduce the backlog of FOIA requests at DOJ and implementing GAO's recommendations to do so?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will consult with personnel from the Department's Office of Information Policy regarding resources to address the Department's FOIA backlog and efforts relating to GAO's recommendations.

7. 18 U.S.C. § 241, also known as the conspiracy against rights statute, makes it unlawful for two or more persons to agree to injure, threaten, or intimidate a person in the United States in the free exercise or enjoyment of any right or privilege secured by the Constitution or laws of the United States or because of his or her having exercised such a right. I ask about this particular statute because some individuals associated with Donald Trump have called for you to open a criminal probe under this statute against lawyers and prosecutors who have investigated Donald Trump or brought cases against him. If you are confirmed, will the Justice Department under your leadership open a criminal probe under 18 U.S.C. § 241 or any other section of the criminal code against lawyers and prosecutors for their roles in investigations related to President Trump?

**RESPONSE:** As I stated in my hearing, if I am confirmed, no one—including political opponents of the President—will be prosecuted on the basis of their political views. At the same time, employees of the Department of Justice who abuse or misuse their office toward improper ends will have no future within the Department and will be subject to dismissal and where appropriate, and after considering the facts of each case, may be subject to criminal prosecution. All of that said, I have made no charging decisions with respect to any criminal prosecutions the Department may undertake if I am confirmed, and I believe it would be inappropriate for me to do so.

8. Will you commit to not firing anyone from the Justice Department solely because they participated in an investigation of Donald Trump or members of the Trump Administration?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 7 above.

9. Do you believe any of the following are inappropriate topics in a conversation between the Attorney General and the President:

- a. Directing the AG to initiate an investigation or prosecution?
- b. Suggesting that "someone" should initiate an investigation or prosecution?

- c. Directing or suggesting a specific action in an ongoing investigation or prosecution?
- d. Selecting the timing of investigative steps or criminal charges of pending investigations?

**RESPONSE:** The hypotheticals above lack sufficient context for me to reach an informed opinion with respect to whether such conversations would be appropriate.

10. In 2017, during your tenure as Florida Attorney General, you urged University of Florida students to stay away from a campus speech planned by white nationalist Richard B. Spencer, warning specifically of his “horrible views.” Would you make the same comments about Spencer’s speech today?

**RESPONSE:** I stand by the statement you quote.

11. Do you believe that renters and home buyers face discrimination on the basis of race?

**RESPONSE:** Yes, any instances of discrimination on the basis of race are wrong and illegal, regardless of the race of the applicant or seller.

12. Would you direct the DOJ, if confirmed as Attorney General, to enforce anti-discrimination laws and investigate and prosecute violations of the Fair Housing Act?

**RESPONSE:** Yes.

13. In 2022, the Justice Department released a slip opinion making clear that the Comstock Act may not be used to prosecute the mailing of mifepristone or misoprostol, which are commonly used for medication abortion, when the sender lacks the intent for the recipient to use the medications illegally. Would you uphold legal precedent that the mere mailing of FDA-approved medications that may be used for medication abortion to a particular jurisdiction is an insufficient basis for concluding that the sender intends them to be used unlawfully?

**RESPONSE:** I have not had the occasion to review any opinion on this subject. If I am confirmed, decisions with respect to the applicability of any federal law will be made only after careful consideration of the relevant facts and law.

14. In 2012, you stated that you would “vigorously oppose” any “ongoing attempt, by the government or by anyone else, to deny women access to contraception.” Would you as Attorney General still “vigorously oppose[s]” any attempt by the government to deny women access to contraception, as you previously stated? And given your previous statements, will you commit to using the power of the Office of the Attorney General, if confirmed, to protect and defend the right to contraception as established in the seminal case, *Griswold v. Connecticut*?

**RESPONSE:** I stand by the statement you quote. *Griswold v. Connecticut* is binding precedent of the Supreme Court entitled to respect as such. If I am confirmed, decisions with respect to the applicability of any federal law will be made only after careful consideration of the relevant facts and law.

15. During your campaign for Attorney General in Florida, you said that you would “vigorously defend Florida’s law banning gay adoption in our state.” This law disturbingly singled out and barred gay and lesbian prospective parents, regardless of whether they were in a same-sex relationship, from adopting children. Do you stand by your previous statement that a law that singles out LGBTQ individuals and denies them the same rights as others is constitutional?

**RESPONSE:** As Florida’s Attorney General, I had a constitutional duty to defend the laws passed by the representatives of the people of the State of Florida. If confirmed, I pledge to uphold the Constitution and laws of the United States of America.

16. You also defended Florida’s ban on marriage equality while state Attorney General, saying explicitly after one judicial decision finding the ban unconstitutional, that you were “just getting started” in defending the ban. Even after marriage equality was established as the law of the land by the Supreme Court’s decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, you opposed a summary judgment motion from plaintiffs who had been fighting for the right to marry for several years. In 2014, you even wrote that “disrupting Florida’s existing marriage laws would impose significant public harm.” Do you still believe that bans on same-sex marriage do not violate the U.S. Constitution?

**RESPONSE:** Please see my response to Question 15.

17. Do you agree with Justice Thomas’s concurrence in the *Dobbs* decision that the Court should reconsider *all* of its substantive due process precedents, including *Griswold*, *Lawrence*, and *Obergefell*?

**RESPONSE:** The majority opinion of *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* is the binding precedent resulting from that decision and is entitled to due respect as such.

18. Would you advise, formally or informally, as Attorney General, if confirmed, the Solicitor General to argue in support of a state law attempting to limit rights on the basis of sexual orientation.

**RESPONSE:** To the extent this question asks about pending matters, it would be inappropriate for me to comment on ongoing litigation. If confirmed as Attorney General, any decisions will be based on a thorough analysis of the law and facts of any particular case.

19. Do you still believe that marriage equality can “impose significant public harm?”

**RESPONSE:** See my response to Question 15.



20. In April 2024, the Department of Education finalized changes to the Title IX rule that would restore critical protections for student survivors of sexual assault and other sex-based harassment, ensure schools treat sex-based harassment seriously, and clarify the rights of LGBTQ students and pregnant and parenting students. These rules are consistent with what the federal courts, including the Supreme Court in *Bostock v. Clayton County*, have held - that discrimination on the basis of sex includes discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation. Will you, if confirmed, enforce Title IX protections for all student survivors of sexual assault and other sex-based harassment?

**RESPONSE:** As Florida's Attorney General, I worked to increase resources and protections for victims of sexual assault. If confirmed, I will continue to fight for victims of sexual assault, and I will enforce and uphold the laws of the United States.

21. Section 922(a)(1) makes it a crime to engage in the business of dealing in firearms without a license. It's been the law since 1968. Unlicensed dealers are a top source for prohibited persons to purchase illegal guns and for gun traffickers to acquire them. Recent data from ATF shows that between 2017 and 2021, more than 40% of gun trafficking cases involved an unlicensed dealer. And, as I'm sure you know, this licensure requirement triggers other statutory requirements for dealers, like running background checks on customers, maintaining transaction records, and responding to trace requests from law enforcement. 18 U.S.C. 922(g)(8) and (9) make it a crime for certain domestic abusers to possess firearms—those subject to domestic violence restraining orders and those convicted of misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence. 18 U.S.C. 932 and 933 are newer additions to the federal criminal code that Congress created in 2022 in the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. Section 932 makes it a crime to purchase firearms for prohibited persons—otherwise known as straw purchasing. And Section 933 makes it a crime to traffic firearms. As of September 2024, the Department of Justice had charged more than 600 defendants under these statutes. Will you commit to enforcing federal gun laws—like the ones described here?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I am committed to enforcing federal gun laws as appropriate and in accordance with the relevant facts and law.

22. If confirmed as Attorney General, will you ensure that ATF has the resources, agents, and support from Main Justice to remain effective in its mission and protect Americans from gun violence?

**RESPONSE:** As I stated at my hearing, if confirmed as the next Attorney General of the United States, my overriding objective will be to return the Department of Justice to its core mission of keeping Americans safe.

23. I'm sure you and I can agree that the attacks in New Orleans and Las Vegas two weeks ago on New Year's Day were heinous acts of terrorism. Based on what is publicly known about the New Orleans case and anything you may have been briefed on during the transition, do you believe it was conducted by a U.S. citizen and Army veteran who was radicalized over time and inspired but not directed by ISIS, and not by someone who had crossed the Southern Border illegally?

**RESPONSE:** Because investigations into these attacks are ongoing and because I am not privy to all the facts uncovered by the investigations, it would be inappropriate for me to discuss these cases.

24. President-elect Trump claimed that the attack was a result of President Biden's border policies, including after the perpetrators citizenship and military record was known. In fact, the FBI and DHS repeatedly warn about the threats of ISIS-inspired attacks by people legally inside the United States. Do you agree that a significant, and perhaps the primary threat of terrorism inside the country is by domestic terrorism or those inspired by foreign terrorist groups?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing relevant information from our law enforcement and intelligence communities to ensure that we appropriately address the various threats to our homeland.

25. Are you familiar with the 2001 and 2002 OLC opinions providing legal approval for warrantless wiretapping and the use of interrogation techniques such as waterboarding and sleep deprivation? In both the surveillance and the interrogation areas, those OLC opinions were rescinded when they came to light. Will you commit to sharing OLC opinions, including classified opinions, with Members and cleared staff of this Committee and the Intelligence Committee on matters within their jurisdiction?

**RESPONSE:** As a career prosecutor for 18 years and Florida's Attorney General for eight years, I have not had occasion to consider those OLC opinions. If confirmed, I will consult with OLC and OLA regarding Departmental standards about sharing opinions with Congress. As noted above, I cannot make any commitments about the disclosure of any existing opinions or future opinions until I have had the opportunity to review them.

26. I am very concerned with transnational repression, especially on U.S. soil. If confirmed, will you commit to using all resources of the Department of Justice needed to combat transnational repression, particularly efforts by countries like Iran, China, Russia, and India to intimidate, coerce, and attempt to physically harm people in the United States?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with Department officials to ensure that we appropriately address the various threats, including threats for foreign countries.

27. After the abuses of the Watergate era, there was a national recognition that the decisions of the Justice Department should be free from politics and free from pressure from the president, the nation's most powerful politician. In 1978, attorney general Griffin Bell spoke publicly to DOJ lawyers about the importance of an independent Justice Department. He said:

*[It] is improper for any Member of Congress, any member of the White House staff, or anyone else, to attempt to influence anyone in the Justice Department with respect to a particular litigation decision, except by legal argument or the provision of relevant facts. This principle is essential to our proper function.*

In the same talk, he also said:

*Our notions of fairness must not change from case to case; they must not be influenced by partisanship, or the privileged social, political or interest-group position of either the individuals involved in particular cases, or those who may seek to intervene against them or on their behalf.*

He added:

*[The] Department must be recognized by all citizens as a neutral zone, in which neither favor nor pressure nor politics is permitted to influence the administration of the law.*

Do you agree that law enforcement decisions at the Justice Department should be based on justice, fairness, and the law?

**RESPONSE:** Yes.

Do you agree that law enforcement decisions should be fully insulated from pressure from the president? If so, what will you do if (when) the president applies pressure to initiate particular investigations/prosecutions, civil or criminal.

**RESPONSE:** The President is the chief law enforcement officer of the United States and all prosecutions must comply with the Constitution and all relevant statutes. As I stated repeatedly, I would not have accepted the nomination to serve as Attorney General if I believed President Trump would ask me to do this.

28. Do you think it is the DOJ's job to prosecute violence against U.S. government personnel and properties?

**RESPONSE:** Yes.

29. Was there violence against U.S. government personnel and properties on January 6, 2021?

**RESPONSE:** Yes.

30. Do you think individuals who used violence against U.S. government personnel and properties on January 6, 2021 should be able to pass background checks? Should they be permitted to be employed by the DOJ? Should they have access to classified information?

**RESPONSE:** Individuals convicted for crimes related the events of January 6, 2021, should be treated no different than others convicted of similar crimes with respect to background checks, employment, or access to classified information.

31. The Trump Campaign, for which you were a senior legal advisor, filed more than 60 lawsuits challenging the 2020 election results. These claims were roundly rejected by courts across the country, including by judges appointed by President Trump himself. And contrary to

what election deniers have continued to claim since 2020, several of those cases were heard and rejected on the merits. In fact, Former Attorney General Bill Barr wrote in his memoir that “The President and his legal team were peddling the narrative of widespread fraud and a stolen election” and that “[t]he available facts did not substantiate those claims, but the peddlers didn’t feel bound to any objective reality; what counted, to them, was whatever Trump wanted to hear.” You knew at the time there was no evidence to support claims of widespread voter fraud in the 2020 election, yet you persisted in making those claims in the media and to the public. Looking back on the outcomes of all the legal proceedings, will you say today that there was no evidence of widespread voter fraud in the 2020 election?

**RESPONSE:** I did not serve as a member of the President’s legal team in any of the cases litigated across that country. My experience with respect to the 2020 election was limited to my work for the campaign in Pennsylvania, and during that period, I saw and heard a number of things that gave me serious concerns about whether local officials were complying with the Commonwealth’s election laws. If confirmed as Attorney General, I will work to restore Americans’ confidence in our electoral processes, and I hope that we are able to work together to do that.

32. By this point, we all know about the controversies surrounding Rudy Giuliani’s actions after the 2020 election, for which he has been disbarred. But what many do not know is that in his testimony to the D.C. Board of Professional Responsibility, Mr. Giuliani stated that he went to Pennsylvania to challenge the election results at Ms. Bondi’s request.

a. Did you encourage Mr. Giuliani to go to Pennsylvania to assist in the Trump Campaign’s efforts to overturn the 2020 election?

**RESPONSE:** I did not ask Mr. Giuliani or anyone to go to Pennsylvania in an effort to “overturn the 2020 election” and to be clear, my role was not to “overturn the 2020 election.” In the days following election day, I traveled Pennsylvania myself and recounted irregularities that I witnessed firsthand.

i. Are you aware that Mr. Giuliani was disbarred in New York and Washington D.C. as a result of the “demonstrably false” statements he made in open court about the 2020 election in Pennsylvania?

**RESPONSE:** I am aware that Mr. Giuliani was disbarred.

b. You made similar public statements to those made by Mr. Giuliani that Donald Trump won the 2020 election in Pennsylvania. You also publicly claimed that there was mass “evidence of cheating” in the state, “fake ballots” being “dump[ed]” and that people who had “receiv[ed] ballots who were dead” and may have voted. Have you ever publicly recanted the false statements you made about the conduct of the 2020 election in Pennsylvania? Will you do so now?

**RESPONSE:** As I explained at the hearing, and in my prior response, I traveled to Pennsylvania as an advocate for the campaign in the days after election day. During that period, I saw a number of things that gave me concern about whether certain local

officials were complying with the Commonwealth's election laws. I expressed those concerns in several public appearances based upon what I saw and upon other information that I was receiving at that time. Many Americans continue to share concerns about the integrity of the 2020 election. If confirmed as Attorney General, I will work to restore Americans' confidence in our electoral processes, and I hope that we are able to work together to do that.

33. In litigation in Georgia, your organization, the America First Policy Institute (AFPI), took the position that a county election official should be permitted to ignore a clear constitutional and statutory obligation to certify the results of an election, effectively allowing these county-level administrators to refuse to count the validly cast votes of their constituents. However, federal law prohibits any person acting under color of law from "willfully fail[ing] or refus[ing] to tabulate, count and report" an eligible American's ballot. As Attorney General, it would be your responsibility to ensure that all Americans' civil rights are protected – including their right to vote and have their votes counted. Will you guarantee that under your leadership, the Department of Justice will not engage in or support efforts to interfere with the lawful tabulation and certification of election results?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will fully and fairly enforce all election-related laws so that Americans can have faith in their election results.

34. In *AFPI v. Biden*, your organization challenged Executive Order 14019, which President Biden issued in March 2021 to encourage federal agencies to integrate voter registration opportunities into their services — similar to the role played by departments of motor vehicles around the country.<sup>15</sup> Although this EO was issued in March of 2021, AFPI waited to seek emergency relief in federal court until just weeks before the 2024 election, asking a federal court in Texas to block the Order by arguing that it was a "weaponize[d]" and "partisan" scheme to register ineligible non-U.S. citizens to vote to benefit Democratic candidates<sup>16</sup>—a dangerous conspiracy theory premised on racist rhetoric and entirely unsupported by facts or evidence. In support of this litigation, and in your capacity as AFPI's litigation chair, you sent a series of public letters to election officials in nine different states accusing them—again without any evidence—of failing in their legal duty to prevent ineligible individuals from voting.<sup>18</sup> Thankfully, AFPI's emergency request was denied by well-known conservative Judge Matthew Kacsmaryk, who held that AFPI did not have standing and that its petition provided "no direct evidence to support its claim" that the Order was resulting in illegal voter registration.

a. You led this litigation and amplified baseless conspiracy theories alleging widespread illegal voting in US elections – statements that a conservative federal judge said were not supported by any "direct evidence."

i. Do you think it is appropriate for an attorney to bring litigation without evidence to support their claims?

ii. Do you think that it is appropriate for the U.S. Attorney General to bring litigation on behalf of the United States without evidence?

**RESPONSE:** Attorneys, including attorneys representing the United States, should follow all applicable legal and ethical obligations when bringing litigation.

b. As the United States' chief law enforcement officer, the Attorney General has a unique platform to promote public confidence in our electoral system by sharing accurate and reliable information with the American people. What will you do as Attorney General to stop the spread of misinformation about American elections, including the lies about the integrity of our election system that proliferated during the 2024 election?

**RESPONSE:** If confirmed, I will instill trust in the Nation's election integrity by fully and fairly enforcing all election-related laws.

**Opening Remarks on the Nomination of Pam Bondi to be Attorney General of  
the United States**

**By: Dave Aronberg**

In 2010, after serving eight years as a State Senator in Florida, I ran for Florida Attorney General. I faced a fellow State Senator in the Democratic primary, and one of three Republican candidates in a potential general election. Pam Bondi was one of those three candidates. This was her first run for any political office, and she was the only candidate in the race on either side whom I did not know.

At our first candidates' forum, she came up to me with a big smile and told me her younger brother worked with me at my old law firm as a summer associate, and had very complimentary things to say. That was vintage Pam Bondi: My potential future opponent immediately disarmed me by ignoring partisanship to reach out as a fellow human being.

Pam won her primary, and I lost mine. I then endorsed my Democratic colleague in the general election, and then Pam won that election too. Despite the fact that I was on the other side of the aisle, and did not support her campaign, Pam called to offer me a position as her "Drug Czar," to combat the opioid epidemic that was ravaging Florida, and to shut down the state's ubiquitous "pill mills" that fed the nation's addiction. She offered me this position because she knew from the campaign trail that fighting the opioid epidemic had been my career priority and an important part of my campaign platform. It did not matter to her that I had a "D" after my name. She believed I was the best person for the job, regardless of party affiliation.

I accepted the position and received a little pushback from my side of the aisle for joining her team, but nothing compared to what Pam Bondi received. At a party event, one county Republican chairman was so angry that he raised his voice and put his finger near her face to condemn her decision. He didn't argue that I was unqualified, just that she was resurrecting a Democrat's political career who had just lost badly in a statewide election. On that, he may have had a point: I served

as Drug Czar for two years and then got elected as a Democratic State Attorney for the next three terms. But you don't wag a finger in Pam Bondi's face and get away with it. Pam is kind and genuine and loves people, but she is also tough as nails.

Pam met this guy's fire with fire, putting her own finger in the party leader's face to defend her new employee, and she didn't care that I was a Democrat or that she didn't know me that well at the time, or that one day this could help me run for office again. She didn't do it because one day she hoped I would have her back during a Senate confirmation hearing. It was just the person she was and still is.

When AG Bondi and I began our anti-pill mill initiative, seven people a day were dying from prescription opioid overdoses, and there were more pain clinics in Florida than McDonald's in Florida. A year later, she convinced a reluctant Republican-dominated legislature to pass crucial, long overdue reforms, including a prescription drug monitoring program that dramatically reduced doctor shopping. AG Bondi used her bully pulpit and her bipartisan relationships to get it done. Today, Florida's pill mills are no more, the steady stream of cars from Appalachia that constituted the "OxyContin Express" are a distant memory, and countless lives have been saved because our state's days as the drug dealer for the rest of the country is an ignominious part of our past.

Pam Bondi and I have always had our political differences, although that has never come between our friendship. I supported the Presidential campaigns of Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris. I've been outspoken on cable TV and streaming channels on a host of legal issues, including the dangers of targeting one's political enemies, and was critical of the Durham investigation, which led to questionable criminal cases and embarrassing acquittals. A prosecutor's job is to follow the evidence and the law, without fear or favor. Pam Bondi is a 20-year prosecutor who understands this. Even if she does something as U.S. Attorney General that I disagree with, I believe that she will always remain tethered to the law.

And there are some important issues where she and I are in complete agreement, such as the need to stop the inflow of deadly fentanyl that has become by far the largest killer within the ongoing opioid epidemic. We agree on tough punishments



for those who engage in the modern day slavery known as human trafficking, and for laws that allow victims to have their low-level crimes expunged and to utilize the T-visa program when needed. We agree on the need for treatment courts, which have proven to be a better alternative to incarceration with a lower recidivism rate for many non-violent drug offenders. And we agree there should be a stronger response to the growing number of antisemitic incidents in our country and especially on college campuses.

Senators, I am grateful for the time to speak with you today and look forward to answering any questions you may have.

**Senate Judiciary Opening Statement regarding Pam Bondi****Nicholas B. Cox****January 16, 2025**

Pam Bondi is one of the finest, most complete prosecutors I have ever worked with. She became an intern and later an Assistant State Attorney in Tampa where I was her supervising chief for many years. Then, twenty years later when she was elected Florida's Attorney General, she selected me to be her Statewide Prosecutor. I have known Ms. Bondi for almost thirty-five years. I wish to share with you my observations and experiences of her as a colleague, her supervisor, her co-counsel, and her Statewide Prosecutor.

When it comes to criminal prosecution, Pam Bondi is unquestionably an "ace". Prosecuting simple battery and DUI to first degree capital murder cases, she has experienced almost everything within the American criminal justice system. From going to the scenes of the tragedy, to the courtrooms, to the witness rooms holding hands of countless victims and their families, she completely understands our system and the rule of law. She appreciates the rules which make our judicial system the best in the world and embraces her role as a criminal prosecutor.

Ms. Bondi is a tenacious, but thoughtful, prosecutor. Crimes of violence upset her the most. She and I tried dozens of cases together before juries, including many first-degree murders. Her level of preparation was outstanding. Her ability to connect with a jury and speak to them on an understandable level was excellent. Juries loved her, defense counsel respected her, and courts listened to her. It was clear Ms. Bondi was there because she believed in what she was doing and the case she was presenting. She has that undefinable something that compels people to want her to succeed.

Ms. Bondi is tough. She quickly earned the title of Career Criminal Prosecutor at a young age due to her clear feelings about repeat offenders and her outstanding abilities in the courtroom. Her task was clear, prosecute the habitual offender seeking the highest sentence possible. She did just that,

would not budge in plea bargaining and almost always held the offender responsible for their offense. Due to her tough on crime approach, she found herself frequently in trial. She loves trying cases.

The impact prosecutors have on many lives is never lost on Ms. Bondi. I have never seen a prosecutor able to comfort a victim's family member like her. At every break during a trial she would immediately go back to sit with the victims, explain what was happening, and reassure them that things were going well. She directed victim resources and took part in consoling families at massive crime scenes where many lives were lost. She cares deeply for victims and their families.

But her deeds were not limited to victims. Traumatized witnesses would garner her support, police officers who experienced the horror of being forced to use deadly force, and even the families of a defendant.... families who had done nothing wrong. We were once prosecuting a case against a man who was facing first degree murder charges. Ms. Bondi discovered he had a young daughter who needed clothes, a uniform for school, but her mother had no money. Ms. Bondi spoke with me about how embarrassing this was for a little girl. The next thing I knew, she purchased several shirts and "skorts" for the defendant's child. This little girl would now look and feel like she fit in at school.

My point is that while Pam Bondi is a tenacious, hard charging prosecutor she has never lost her humanity. In her dedicated fight for justice, she never allows herself to stop caring about people and appreciate the little things that can impact lives. She is a complete prosecutor.

When Ms. Bondi became the Florida Attorney General, she did not forget her prosecutorial experiences. From the beginning she began taking steps to shield the Office of Statewide Prosecution and me from politics, knowing prosecutors must be independent and free of influence. She handled all our legislative needs and dealt with legislative or gubernatorial requests. She always tried to politically shield us so we could be truly independent and able to do our jobs well.

I recall the terrible death of an infant that occurred while in the care of the Florida Department of Children and Families. At the time, the Attorney

General's Office provided legal services for the Department. While the public attention focused on the Department, Ms. Bondi wondered if her legal team made any mistakes. I had just finished 4 years of service as a regional director for the Department, so Ms. Bondi asked me to review the matter with her Inspector General. We did so, and found legal errors were made. Ms. Bondi directed me to write a report with recommendations. When I did so, she released it publicly without hesitation. As a result, positive changes were made with the legal services procedures and practices. She took the hit but was later praised for doing it.

I am told some of you met Ms. Bondi before today. I am guessing many, if not all of you, noticed her very friendly nature. It is hard to walk away from meeting her and not like her, even if you do not agree with her. She is very kind and thoughtful. She likes people, and people like her. I know her family, especially her mother and late father who are salt of the earth, wonderful people. The apple did not fall far from the tree. You would be hard pressed to find people in Tampa who have any negative relationship or ill will towards her. Agree with her or not, Pam Bondi is a good person who cares.

To my colleagues at the Department of Justice, the many federal prosecutors throughout our country, I hope you get to work with Ms. Bondi as I have. As Mr. Aronberg recently said, you have nothing to fear from her as a prosecutor. To the contrary, you will find your work even more fulfilling and meaningful. You too will love working with Pam Bondi.

**Sheriff Emery Gainey**  
**Opening Remarks on the Nomination of Pamela J. Bondi**  
**to be Attorney General of the United States**  
**Senate Judiciary Committee**  
**January 16, 2025**

Good Morning Chairman Grassley and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Thank you for allowing me to testify before you today on behalf of United States Attorney General Nominee Pamela J. Bondi.

I am Emery Gainey, a 40-year career law enforcement Officer, who has served at all levels of law enforcement, to include serving as the Sheriff in two Florida counties.

I've had the distinct pleasure of knowing and working with Ms. Bondi since 2010.

As a member of her Senior Executive Staff; I served as her Director of Law Enforcement, Victim Services and Criminal Justice Programs when she assumed office as the Attorney

General in January 2011 and I continued to serve in those capacities through her eight-year tenure as Florida's Attorney General.

To this day we continue to maintain a very close professional, personal and family friendship.

I want to speak this morning about Ms. Bondi's commitment to the just and proper enforcement of the law; demonstrated through her well-earned relationships with local, state and federal law enforcement partners throughout the United States.

During her service as a prosecutor in Florida's Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, Ms. Bondi had well established and deep-rooted relationships with the local, state and federal law enforcement agencies.

Upon becoming Attorney General, she immediately began the process of meeting with the leaders of all law enforcement agencies throughout the state to establish partnerships to ensure the citizens and visitors to our state receive the most effective level of law enforcement and victim services available.

One critical issue that she immediately took on was the emerging proliferation of deadly designer drugs, specifically those referred to as bath salts, that our state was facing prior to her being elected Attorney General.

Ms. Bondi called together stakeholders, to include prosecutors, law enforcement, our Office of Drug Control, our state laboratory directors and others, to not only understand this new trend in our state, but to seek immediate solutions to stop the spread of these deadly substances that were taking the lives of many of our citizens.

From these stakeholder meetings, she developed a strategy and a call to action to immediately outlaw these dangerous bath salt substances. Utilizing Florida's rulemaking statutes and bipartisan support from members of Florida's legislature, she was able to permanently ban the sale of these deadly drugs; despite the continuous efforts by those who altered their formulas to circumvent Florida Law, in an attempt to keep versions of these harmful substances on the shelves of some retailers.

These actions, in conjunction with our public and private partners, began to effectively address a growing trend in illegal substance abuse in our state.

Ms. Bondi's commitment to the rule of law was also evident in her taking the lead in investigating and prosecuting crimes involving Criminal Gang Activities, Organized Retail Theft, Human Trafficking and a host of other criminal activities.

She also demonstrated her deep commitment to help restore the lives of victims of Human Trafficking through her leadership role on Florida's Statewide Council on Human Trafficking, by investing in and supporting safe houses for victims. She also partnered with multiple private businesses to help combat human trafficking, in both the sex and labor industries, by establishing a zero tolerance tool kit to train staff in identifying and reporting suspected cases of Human Trafficking.

I want to focus now on the compassionate side of her tenure, where she was - and remains a staunch supporter of crime victims and the rights of crime victims.

One of her roles as Attorney General was the delivery of crime victim services. The Florida Attorney General's Office was the recipient of and administered the third largest



annual award of Federal Crime Victim Compensation Funding, in addition to State Crime Victim Funds.

Ms. Bondi dedicated a team of experienced victim advocates, and crime compensation professionals, to work with our local governmental and non-governmental agencies to ensure victims of crime received all the benefits allowable by state and federal laws.

Her personal compassion was constantly on full display when meeting with crime victims and their families. She did so at the scene of crimes, in hospital rooms, at family relocation centers, at conferences for victims of crime, and one on one in her office.

She demonstrated her commitment to fairness and justice by not only rigorously seeking to hold perpetrators of crime responsible for their acts of violence, but she also demonstrated that same level of passion, care and empathy for those innocent citizens who found themselves; through no fault of their own, a victim of some of the most horrific crimes committed by individuals against fellow human beings.

Mr. Chairman, The United States of America and the American people would be very well served by confirming Pamela Jo Bondi as our next United States Attorney General.

Thank you.

Public Citizen's Written Testimony for the Record  
United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary

Hearing: The Nomination of the Honorable Pam Bondi to be Attorney General  
of the United States: Day 2

Submitted by Lisa Gilbert  
Co-President, Public Citizen

January 16, 2025

**Introduction:**

Chair Grassley, Ranking Member Durbin, thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am Lisa Gilbert, Co-President of Public Citizen.

Public Citizen is a 54-year-old nonprofit advocacy organization with 500,000 members and supporters around the country. We champion the public interest in the halls of power. We use strategic lobbying, aggressive litigation, in-depth research, coalition-building and savvy grassroots organizing to push for bold, transformative change – ensuring that our government and economy works for the people, not just for corporations or the wealthy and well-connected few.

Public Citizen respectfully submits testimony to the Committee on behalf of our members and supporters in opposition to the nomination of Pam Bondi for the role of Attorney General. The mission of the Department of Justice (DOJ) is to work on behalf of the American people, to keep our country safe, to protect civil rights, and to uphold the rule of law.

The attorney general must be seen by the public as a fair arbiter of our legal system, whose sole duty is to serve them. Unfortunately, the attorneys general who served under President Trump in his first term failed to live up to this high standard. From their validation of President Trump's subversion of voting rights and our democracy, to their inhumane separation of immigrant families at the border, to their abuses of our criminal justice system, they all too often served as Trump loyalists rather than independent law enforcement officials; and Pam Bondi is cut from this same cloth.

Bondi echoed Donald Trump's false claims of voter fraud after the 2020 election. On the day after Election Day in 2020, Bondi attended a Trump campaign press conference in Philadelphia alongside Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani. At that press conference, Bondi twice asserted that Trump had "won Pennsylvania."<sup>1</sup> However, at that time, approximately 1 million mail-in ballots

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.c-span.org/program/campaign-2020/trump-campaign-news-conference-in-philadelphia/556103>

in Pennsylvania had yet to be counted<sup>2</sup> and no major media outlets had called the state for Trump.

The attorney general oversees enforcement of our nation's voting rights laws, among many other duties. Bondi's record of making false claims of voter fraud and working to limit voter access is more than sufficient reason to reject her nomination.

We should expect an Attorney General Bondi to serve as a Trump loyalist at the expense of the Department's independence and integrity. Bondi helped defend Trump during the first impeachment trial and has numerous troubling conflicts of interest from her time as a lobbyist.

We focus the balance of our testimony on the issue of these conflicts.

#### **Lobbying Clients:**

Public Citizen has a long track record of investigating conflicts of interests and potential corruption. Our recent examination<sup>3</sup> of the federal lobbying disclosures and Foreign Agents Registration Act reports filed by Pam Bondi and Ballard Partners, the lobbying firm she worked for as a registered federal lobbyist<sup>4</sup> revealed that her lobbying client list is littered with controversial clients, some of which stand to benefit from having their former lobbyist put in charge of DOJ.

A review of these records and further research into Bondi's lobbying shows that Bondi registered to represent 30 clients - from large corporations and government contractors to a foreign government - between 2019 and 2024 targeting the White House, Congress, and 12 federal agencies.<sup>5</sup> Bondi represented a variety of controversial corporate clients: a gambling company that sued DOJ over a legal opinion; a private prison firm that the DOJ Inspector General criticized; mega-tech companies that have received billions in government contracts while battling government regulations, and more.

A recent New York Times review, "A 'Business-Friendly' Lawyer's Rise from Lobbyist to Attorney General Pick,"<sup>6</sup> found several pieces of evidence that seem to demonstrate her general tendency to assist corporate allies, and corporate lobbyists' belief that Bondi, when she was Florida's Attorney General, was exceptionally accessible to lobbyists, eager to meet with lobbyists and private dinners and other functions, and amenable to agendas of the lobbyists' clients. From her time as Florida AG they sourced a confidential memo from the firm Dickstein

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/politics/decision-2020/millions-of-ballots-left-to-be-counted-in-pennsylvania-as-vote-tally-continues/2584607/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.citizen.org/article/conflicted-justice/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://ballardpartners.com/team-member/pam-bondi/>

<sup>5</sup> United States Senate Lobbying Disclosure Act Database Lobbying Reports (LDA Reports) filed for "Pamela Bondi," accessed November 27, 2024; <https://tinyurl.com/4bmhykxb>; Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) Statement, filed 7/23/19, stating that Pamela Bondi was registering to lobby on behalf of the Embassy of the State of Qatar; <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/6415-Short-Form-20190723-106.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Id.

Shapiro in Washington DC where their lobbyists characterized Bondi as a "... business friendly, media-savvy AG." They also documented her close relationship with Bernard Nash. Nash is the self-described Washington DC "godfather" of law practices that lobby state attorneys general<sup>7</sup>. Nash identified Bondi as an AG "willing to engage with his team as they discouraged investigations and litigations." Emails show that "Ms. Bondi was among the most receptive to Mr. Nash's appeals." The Times reported several examples, including that after Mr. Nash's team pushed Pam Bondi to drop a lawsuit against the travel site Travelocity that had been filed by her predecessor, she soon did.<sup>8</sup>

#### **Domestic Conflicts:**

Pam Bondi had a large number of corporate clients with business matters and engagements across government, but for purposes of this testimony we highlight three: Geo Group- a private prisons company, IGT Global Solutions- a gambling company, and Amazon- a merchandise distributor and e-commerce giant.

According to federal lobbying filings, Bondi was registered to lobby the first Trump White House in 2019 for The Geo Group, the nation's largest private prisons company, which owns, leases, and manages correctional, detention, and re-entry facilities for DOJ agencies the United States Marshals Service and the Board of Prisons, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) under the Department of Homeland Security, and for states, counties, and cities across the U.S.<sup>9</sup> Both DOJ and Homeland Security Inspector General audits have been critical of prison management by GEO Group and other private prison companies<sup>10</sup> and the GEO Group stands to profit substantially if the Trump Administration's new immigration detention and deportation policies result in filling empty or underutilized beds at its facilities.<sup>11</sup> As precedent, Public Citizen research in 2019 showed Geo Group's contract dollars rising by just over 40% during the first two years of Trump's first term.<sup>12</sup> Lobbying reports filed in 2019 reveal that while Bondi was registered to lobby for The Geo Group, her lobbying firm was paid \$60,000 by The Geo Group.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cozen.com/people/bios/nash-bernie>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/08/us/politics/pam-bondi-trump-attorney-general-lobbyist.html>

<sup>9</sup> LDA Report for Ballard Partners, listing Pam Bondi as a lobbyist for client The Geo Group, filed 10/21/19; <https://lga.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/908e8081-b0f6-472f-a318-c6f9ca62f28c/print/>; "Audit of the United States Marshals Service's Contract Awarded to The Geo Group, Incorporated to Operate the Robert A. Deyton Detention Facility, Lovejoy, Georgia," U.S. Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General, July 2020; [https://oig.justice.gov/sites/default/files/reports/20-085\\_0.pdf](https://oig.justice.gov/sites/default/files/reports/20-085_0.pdf); "The nation's largest private prisons operator is based in Florida. And profits are up," Miami Herald, 4/22/19

<sup>10</sup> <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/2016/c1606.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> "Private prison firms contributed more than \$1M to Trump's reelection. Now they expect a business boom," ABC News, 11/20/24; <https://abcnews.go.com/US/private-prison-firms-contributed-1m-trumpsreelection-now/story?id=116046776>; "Pam Bondi, Trump's New AG Pick, Lobbied for Private Prisons and Amazon," The Intercept, 11/22/24; <https://theintercept.com/2024/11/22/trumps-new-ag-pick-lobbied-for-private-prisons-and-amazon/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.citizen.org/news/private-contractors-made-billions-from-immigration-and-corrections-contracts-under-trump-obama/>

According to federal lobbying filings, Bondi was registered to lobby the first Trump White House in 2019 and 2020 for the gambling company IGT Global Solutions, which operates state lotteries and video game slot machines across the U.S. along with its parent company and subsidiaries.<sup>13</sup> According to news reports, IGT has had multiple conflicts with DOJ in recent years: it sued DOJ and the Attorney General to overturn DOJ's legal position on whether the company could perform gambling-related transactions electronically across state lines under the Interstate Wire Act<sup>14</sup> and it has a large merger pending that has undergone DOJ review.<sup>15</sup> Lobbying reports filed in 2019 disclosed that, while Bondi was registered to lobby for IGT Global Solutions, her lobbying firm was paid \$120,000 by IGT Global Solutions.<sup>16</sup>

Amazon is of course a well-known tech company. According to news reports, in recent years, it has been investigated by DOJ over injury rates and workplace safety at its warehouses,<sup>17</sup> been referred to DOJ by a bipartisan group of lawmakers for potential criminal obstruction,<sup>18</sup> and had its robotaxi unit federally investigated over safety concerns.<sup>19</sup> In addition, DOJ and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) recently reached a settlement with Amazon regarding children's privacy violations via Alexa,<sup>20</sup> though the company is still facing a wide-ranging antitrust suit from the FTC.<sup>21</sup> Amazon has also received multi-billion-dollar government contracts from multiple federal agencies. According to federal lobbying filings, Bondi was registered to lobby the first Trump White House, Congress, and two federal agencies in 2020 for Amazon.<sup>22</sup>

#### **International Clients:**

As mentioned, Pam Bondi was registered as a Foreign Agent under FARA. The New York Times called her a "particular kind of lobbyist" – a "well-known lawyer, with close connections to power, who uses these ties to free foreign clients from sanctions, human rights scrutiny, or criminal charges."<sup>23</sup>

Pam Bondi was registered as a foreign agent for Qatar<sup>24</sup>, with a goal of improving their human rights record before the 2022 World Cup. The official contract between Bondi's lobbying firm,

<sup>13</sup> <https://fda.senate.gov/public/filing/48ca5ceb-b245-40c4-b4ea-185b51b0c0b8/print/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.vixio.com/insights/gc-igt-wins-wire-act-case-against-justice-department-rhode-island>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.reviewjournal.com/business/casinos-gaming/igt-execs-confident-apollo-deal-will-winregulatory-approval-3104545/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://fda.senate.gov/public/filing/c7e8e67d-dc70-4988-8499-e6b9208f9d61/print/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.seattletimes.com/business/doj-probes-amazon-for-alleged-knowledge-of-warehouse-safety-hazards/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/03/09/house-judiciary-amazon-obstruction/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/amazon-autonomous-vehicle-investigation-crashes-zoox-45c53600710407bc6f82b0a855c46e12>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/amazon-agrees-injunctive-relief-and-25-million-civil-penalty-alleged-violations-childrens>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/news/press-releases/2023/09/ftc-sues-amazon-illegally-maintaining-monopoly-power>

<sup>22</sup> <https://fda.senate.gov/public/filing/c0eb222d-09af-460d-afc1-44e5a54c0790/print/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/08/us/politics/pam-bondi-trump-attorney-general-lobbyist.html>

<sup>24</sup> FARA Statement, filed 7/23/19, stating that Pamela Bondi was registering to lobby on behalf of the Embassy of the State of Qatar; <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/6415-Short-Form-20190723-106.pdf>; FARA Filing by Ballard

Ballard Partners, and the Embassy of Qatar stated that the scope of services was to “provide Government relations strategic advice and advocacy with respect to enhancing US-Qatar bilateral relations, and further developing trade, investment and business opportunities,” and to “provide consulting and advocacy services regarding matters involving anti-human trafficking.”

Bondi also registered to lobby on behalf of a Kuwaiti investment firm in an attempt to free the principal—characterized by the Times<sup>25</sup> as a Russian money manager—who was arrested in Kuwait on charges of embezzlement by her and her staff of tens of millions in government funds. That advocacy included lobbying Congress, the State Department and the White House to pressure Kuwait to release her and to consider using Magnitsky Act sanctions against Kuwaiti officials and generated \$350,000 in fees for Ballard Partners.<sup>26</sup>

### **Conclusion:**

Senators should not confirm a person with this record of controversial business and foreign government lobbying representation as Attorney General of the United States. We want to be clear: these are not problems that can be addressed adequately by Bondi agreeing to recuse herself from cases involving corporations and countries for which she previously lobbied. Bondi’s broad representation of, and lobby registration for, corporate interests is much more than a list of specific potential conflicts, but instead reflects an overall sense of priorities that cannot be cured by recusals. It constitutes a net of potential conflicts from which there is no realistic escape. A well-functioning Justice Department should be tough on corporate crime and work to improve the lives of our communities. This level of corporate entanglement speaks to exactly the wrong incentives.

There is a proven record of this problem. Though President-Elect Trump may talk tough on crime, the last time he took office, corporate enforcement plummeted. Public Citizen research found that in the first year of the Trump administration corporate penalties at the DOJ dropped 90 percent.<sup>27</sup>

If Pam Bondi becomes AG, we would have every reason to expect a similar result. Public Citizen has created a *Corporate Enforcement Tracker*<sup>28</sup> to serve as a resource for watchdogging ongoing federal investigations and cases against alleged corporate wrongdoing that are at risk of being dropped, weakened, or otherwise modified in the next administration.

As of today, Public Citizen’s *Corporate Enforcement Tracker* includes a total of 237 investigations and cases against 192 distinct corporations. Nearly one third of these companies have known ties with the Trump administration. They or their executives have either contributed

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Partners, filed 7/23/19, reflecting Pam Bondi’s addition to the lobbying contract; <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/6415-Exhibit-AB-20190723-16.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/08/us/politics/pam-bondi-trump-attorney-general-lobbyist.html>

<sup>26</sup> <https://ida.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/335a8be7-be37-4ed1-8deb-9ba37fd85769/print/>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.citizen.org/news/penalties-for-corporate-violations-plummet-by-double-digits-under-trump/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.citizen.org/article/corporate-enforcement-trump-tracker/>



to his inauguration, or Trump has nominated their former employees, investors, and lobbyists. And as highlighted throughout our testimony, Pam Bondi is no exception.

This nation needs a Justice Department that will do everything in its power to crack down on corporate crime and fight for voting rights, criminal justice, LGBTQ equality, disability rights, environmental justice, reproductive freedom, the rights of working people, and other pressing civil and human rights issues. The ability of the Attorney General to represent the interests of the American public must not be compromised. We depend on the DOJ to vigorously enforce our laws, hold corporate wrongdoers accountable, and protect the rule of law

If Pam Bondi's nomination as Attorney General proceeds, we fear she will instead be a driven loyalist to Donald Trump and take actions that reflect the needs of the entities she so recently represented. The Senate should refuse to confirm Pam Bondi to be attorney general of the United States.

Senator Durbin has sent important inquiries to the National Archives and the DOJ asking them to turn over additional information on Bondi to determine whether her past lobbying work for companies and foreign governments could pose a conflict of interest if she is confirmed as attorney general. We support this request for additional essential details beyond what is available in public disclosures.<sup>29</sup>

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to present the views of Public Citizen. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

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<sup>29</sup> <https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/5079887-durbin-questions-bondi-conflict/>



**Senate Question for the Record from Senator Adam Schiff to Lisa Gilbert**

1. *Ms. Gilbert: Can you describe the circumstances where it would be appropriate for Ms. Bondi, if confirmed, to recuse herself from working on or influencing department decisions vis-à-vis her prior representation of her corporate clients as a lobbyist?*

Public trust requires public officials to demonstrate unequivocally that they are serving the needs of the American people rather than favoring the powerful and corporate interests.

That's why it's so troubling that Ms. Bondi, in her Senate Questionnaire<sup>1</sup>, confirmation hearing,<sup>2</sup> and in written responses to Senators' Questions<sup>3</sup>, repeatedly refused to make a specific commitment to recuse herself from working on or influencing department decisions that could impact her former lobbying clients. Instead, Ms. Bondi deflected Senators' direct questions with a vague response that she would consult with an "appropriate" ethics official and act "consistent" with governing regulations.<sup>4</sup>

As I stated during the hearing, we believe that the complex net of Ms. Bondi's corporate conflicts coupled with the access she granted to corporate lobbyists while Attorney General of Florida creates an overall attitude towards corporate America and K-street which recusals are not sufficient to cure. We oppose her confirmation on these grounds. That said, if she is confirmed, Ms. Bondi should attempt to ameliorate the problem by recusing herself from all meetings, discussions, and decision-making that involves her 30 former lobbying clients<sup>5</sup>, her former law client Pfizer Inc.<sup>6</sup>, or Ballard Partners, the lobbying firm she was a partner in and registered lobbyist for.<sup>7</sup>

If there are meetings, discussions, or decisions related to:

- active or potential Department of Justice civil or criminal **inquiries, investigations, or cases** involving her **30 former lobbying clients**; or
- past, current, or potential Department of Justice or DOJ agency **contracts** with her **30 former lobbying clients**; or
- active or potential Department of Justice **inquiries or investigations** into her **former lobbying firm Ballard Partners**, Ms. Bondi should recuse herself.

Here are three specific examples:

1. Public Citizen's January 2025 report "Conflicted Justice"<sup>8</sup> revealed that one of Ms. Bondi's lobbying clients was IGT Global Services, a gambling company that sued to overturn DOJ's legal position on whether the company could perform gambling-related transactions electronically across state lines under the Interstate Wire Act.<sup>9</sup> If a similar lawsuit was filed by this or any other former lobbying client of Ms.

Bondi's, it would be appropriate for her to recuse herself from any involvement in DOJ's response.

2. Another example is Ms. Bondi's legal representation of Pfizer, Inc. In her Public Financial Disclosure Report, Ms. Bondi disclosed that she provided legal services to Pfizer, Inc. while working as Of Counsel to the law firm Panza, Maurer & Maynard.<sup>10</sup> Pfizer has been involved in five recent Department of Justice investigations, according to Public Citizen's Corporate Enforcement Tracker.<sup>11</sup> If these or subsequent similar matters involving Pfizer or Ms. Bondi's other former clients arise, it would be appropriate for Ms. Bondi to recuse herself from any involvement in DOJ's response.
3. A third example involves Ms. Bondi's work from January 2019-November 2019 and 2020-2025 as a lobbyist and partner at Ballard Partners.<sup>12</sup> Ballard Partners and a number of its associates, including Ms. Bondi, have been registered with the Department of Justice's Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) Unit to represent foreign governments or other foreign entities.<sup>13</sup> Should any FARA Unit inquiries or investigations arise alleging that Ballard Partners failed to register or properly disclose that involve Ms. Bondi's former clients, business partners, or firm, it would be appropriate for her to recuse herself from any involvement in DOJ's response.

A well-functioning Justice Department should be tough on corporate crime and work to improve the lives of our communities. The ability of the Attorney General to represent the interests of the American people must not be compromised by the appearance of a conflict of interest in DOJ decisions made about investigations, contracts, and policy. The American people depend on the Department of Justice to vigorously enforce our laws, hold corporate wrongdoers accountable, and protect the rule of law, without fear or favor.

*Institute for*  
**Constitutional Advocacy and Protection**  

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**GEORGETOWN LAW**

Hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee

The Nomination of the Honorable Pamela Jo Bondi  
to be the Attorney General of the United States

Mary B. McCord  
Executive Director, Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection  
Visiting Professor of Law, Georgetown University Law Center

January 16, 2025

Distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify about the importance of the independence of the Attorney General, and the Department of Justice, when making investigative and prosecutorial decisions.

I am currently the Executive Director of the non-partisan Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection (ICAP) and a Visiting Professor of Law at Georgetown Law. In this role, I lead a team that uses strategic legal advocacy to defend constitutional rights and values while working to restore confidence in the integrity of our governmental institutions. Through litigation, public education, and policy work, ICAP seeks to safeguard rights to free expression, assembly, and democratic participation; combat threats of political violence; fight against criminal justice system overreach; defend the rights of young people and marginalized communities; and preserve fundamental separation-of-powers principles. ICAP's work includes representing former law enforcement and national security officials across the political spectrum, as well as providing advice to current government officials from both sides of the aisle on how to protect public safety while preserving constitutional rights.

Before launching ICAP in mid-2017, I spent nearly 25 years in the Executive Branch, most of it in the Department of Justice. I was an Assistant United States Attorney in the District of Columbia from 1994 through 2014, serving under both Republican and Democratic administrations. In 2014, I moved to the Department headquarters, known as “Main Justice,” where I served in a career capacity as the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General for National Security before becoming the Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security in 2016. I served through transition into the Trump Administration before leaving in May of 2017.

### **Introduction**

In my more than two decades at the Department of Justice, both at the U.S. Attorney’s Office in D.C. and at the National Security Division at Main Justice, I rarely knew the political party affiliations of my attorney and law enforcement colleagues, and I believe this to be true of the vast majority of DOJ employees. Aside from public integrity cases where abuse of political office was the very thing being investigated, politics was irrelevant to our mission of upholding the rule of law, keeping the country safe, and protecting civil rights, all without prejudice or improper influence.

Although respect for the Department of Justice has ebbed and flowed ever since it was established in 1870, the political polarization of recent years and the rhetoric around the weaponization of the Department has elevated the concern about impartial adherence to the rule of law.

When I talk about the rule of law, I am referring to several core features of the legal system on which a liberal democracy is based. First, it means a system of laws that both the governed and the government agree to abide. Second, it requires transparency in the enactment and enforcement of the law so that there is predictability and stability. Third, it requires a fair legal system in which rights

and responsibilities are evenly adjudicated. And finally, it requires diverse, competent, and independent lawyers and judges.

The lawyers and law enforcement officials that comprise the Department of Justice, whether at Main Justice, the U.S. Attorneys' offices, the FBI, or other component law enforcement agencies, are critical to preventing the weaponization of the Department and preserving impartial adherence to the rule of law. For the Attorney General, this means taking seriously their oath of office, which is to the Constitution, not the President. It means recusal if their impartiality regarding any particular investigation or case could reasonably be questioned. And it means reaffirming longstanding policies limiting contacts between the Department and the White House on specific investigations and cases, in order to ensure the independence of the Department from improper political influence.

**The Oath is to the Constitution, not a Person**

The Oath of Office taken by the Attorney General requires the person so appointed to solemnly swear or affirm that:

I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter.

The oath to the Constitution means that if and when there is inconsistency between what the President may ask or direct the Attorney General to do and what the Constitution requires, the Attorney General must choose the latter. Although she is a political appointee and member of the President's cabinet, and therefore obligated and expected to implement the President's policy priorities, that obligation is limited by the Constitution. That means, among many other things, not targeting people or organizations for investigation, prosecution, or retaliation based on protected speech or association; not executing searches without a warrant

and not seeking warrants without probable cause; and not denying due process of law, and the equal protection of the law, to all people within the United States' jurisdiction.

It also means that any prior role as part of the President's legal defense team is over once the oath of office is taken. The Attorney General is not the President's personal attorney; she is the attorney for the United States. When President Ronald Reagan nominated William French Smith, his former personal attorney, to be the Attorney General, Smith was asked during his confirmation hearing how he "propose[d] to insure that [his] former relationship will not compromise [his] independence." Smith responded, "I would have to be, very conscious of situations where it could appear that because of that relationship a problem might be created. Certainly, if a situation arises involving the President or a member of his family or others in a sensitive situation, I would recuse myself from participating or handling any aspect which might develop out of that situation." When asked how he would "insulate the Department of Justice from White House interference in general," he answered that he would review the White House contacts policies of previous Attorneys General and continue them if they appeared to be effective.

#### **Recusal Where Impartiality Could Reasonably Be Questioned**

Smith recognized the legitimate concerns that members of Congress and the public might have about his independence as the Attorney General after having served as Ronald Reagan's personal lawyer. He acknowledged the different role he would be playing going forward, and the importance of being "very conscious where it could appear" that his prior relationship might add to that concern. As relevant to the confirmation of President Trump's nominee for Attorney General, Ms. Bondi's prior work as part of the President's legal defense team during the first impeachment proceedings could create at the very least the appearance of a

lack of independence if she were to open investigations into those who had brought the articles of impeachment or prosecuted the matter. Similarly, given some public statements Ms. Bondi made, prior to her nomination, about the potential investigation and prosecution of attorneys and FBI agents involved in the criminal cases against President Trump, the initiation of such investigations or prosecutions could again, at the very least, create an appearance of a lack of independence and improper political influence. Further, in light of her prior personal representation of President Trump, any involvement by Ms. Bondi in civil litigation involving Donald Trump in his personal capacity, such as a suit against the Department of Justice and the FBI for over \$100 million related to the court-authorized search of Mar-a-Lago, about which his private attorneys gave notice last year, could also create at least the appearance of impartiality.

The attorneys and law enforcement officials at the Department of Justice, as well as the public, deserve to know whether Ms. Bondi would recuse herself from such a situation where independence and adherence to the rule of law might reasonably be questioned.

**Reaffirming White House Contacts Policies to  
Help Insulate the Department from Political Influence**

In 1978, four years after Richard Nixon resigned from the presidency in the wake of the Watergate scandal, Attorney General Griffin Bell gave an address to Department of Justice lawyers in the Great Hall of the Main Justice building in Washington, D.C. Attorney General Bell called it “Independence of the Department of Justice.” In this address, he established the first of what has become known as the Department’s “White House Contacts Policy,” and which has been reaffirmed by Attorneys General under both Republican and Democratic presidents ever since.

Attorney General Bell noted that “the partisan activities of some Attorneys General in this century, combined with the unfortunate legacy of Watergate, have given rise to an understandable public concern that some decisions at Justice may be the products of favor, or pressure, or politics.” He explained the constitutional impediment to complete institutional independence of the Justice Department from the President, as the Department is of course part of the Executive Branch led by the President. But he nevertheless emphasized that “the President is best served if the Attorney General and the lawyers who assist him are free to exercise their professional judgment.” And “just as important, they must be perceived by the American people as being free to do so.”

To implement this objective, Attorney General Bell announced the establishment of procedures and principles to “insure, to the extent possible, that improper considerations will not enter into our legal judgments.” Chief among these procedures and principles was the policy that all communications about particular cases from the White House or Congress must be referred to the Attorney General, Deputy Attorney General, or Associate Attorney General. In Attorney General Bell’s view, “it is improper for any Member of Congress, any member of the White House staff, or anyone else, to attempt to influence anyone in the Justice Department with respect to a particular litigation decision, except by legal argument or the provision of relevant facts.” Indeed, he explained, “[o]ur notions of fairness must not change from case to case; they must not be influenced by partisanship, or the privileged social, political or interest-group position of either the individuals involved in particular cases, or those who may seek to intervene against them or on their behalf.”

This policy was memorialized in writing a year later by Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti. Subsequent Attorneys General have reissued The White House Contacts policy by memo, or left in place the memos of previous Attorneys



General. The White House itself has also issued its own contacts policy throughout post-Watergate administrations, governing not only contacts with the Department of Justice, but also with other departments and agencies.

The rationale for these policies has been consistent since 1978. For example, the memo issued by Attorney General Merrick Garland on July 21, 2021, begins with: “The success of the Department of Justice depends upon the trust of the American people. That trust must be earned every day. And we can do so only through our adherence to the longstanding Departmental norms of independence from inappropriate influences, the principled exercise of discretion, and the treatment of like cases alike.”

The DOJ policy recognizes the tension between protecting “the norms of Departmental independence and integrity in making decisions regarding criminal and civil law enforcement while at the same time preserving the President’s ability to perform his constitutional obligation to ‘take care that the laws be faithfully executed.’” This is the constitutional impediment to complete institutional independence referred to by Attorney General Bell more than four decades ago. The policy thus seeks to achieve its goal by prohibiting the Department from advising the White House about pending or contemplated enforcement actions, subject to limited exceptions, while specifically permitting communications between the Department and the White House regarding the advancement of the Administration’s policies and intergovernmental relations, so long as they do not relate to pending or contemplated law enforcement investigations or cases. Just as in Bell’s time, in order to insulate those who initiate and supervise law enforcement investigations, such as U.S. Attorneys and Assistant Attorneys General and those who work for them, communications with the White House about pending or contemplated investigations and cases must involve only the

Attorney General or Deputy Attorney General at the Department, and the Counsel or Deputy Counsel to the President or Vice President at the White House.

The parallel White House policy, memorialized by Counsels to the President over multiple administrations and directed to all White House staff, is similarly grounded in balancing the need “to ensure the integrity of government decision making and public confidence that decisions by government officials are made based on appropriate considerations” with “the President’s constitutional obligation to take care that the laws be faithfully executed.” Although this policy contains provisions that restrict contacts with all departments and agencies about specific matters involving named parties, it places even more extensive restrictions on contacts with the Department of Justice, consistent with the memos of Attorneys General over successive administrations since Watergate. Specifically, the policy says that “White House personnel may never engage in any communication with DOJ regarding a particular contemplated or pending investigation with the intent to improperly influence the Department of Justice.”

The incoming Attorney General would be well advised to continue to adhere to the White House Contacts policy, and to urge the White House Counsel to do the same. Attorneys General and White House Counsel of both political parties, including the Attorneys General and White House Counsel in President Trump’s first administration, have recognized the importance of this policy to ensuring that the public can have confidence that decisions about law enforcement investigations and prosecutions are being made based on the facts and the law, and not improper political influence.

**CONCLUSION**

Public respect for the Department of Justice and the work of its attorneys and law enforcement officials begins with public respect for the Attorney General. That respect comes from impartial adherence to the rule of law, free from improper political influence. The Senate should ensure that the next Attorney General is committed to taking the steps to earn that respect.



## A P P E N D I X

### The following submissions are available at:

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-119shrg61320/pdf/CHRG-119shrg61320-add1.pdf>

### Submitted by Chairman Grassley:

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Aguiñaga, J. Benjamin, et al., former Department of Justice officials, January 6, 2025, letter .....          | 2  |
| Anderson, John C., et al., former United States Attorneys, January 13, 2025, letter .....                     | 9  |
| Concerned Women for America Legislative Action Committee, January 13, 2025, letter .....                      | 16 |
| Fraternal Order of Police, January 2, 2025, letter to U.S. President-elect Donald J. Trump .....              | 18 |
| Independent Women, January 15, 2025, letter .....   | 19 |
| International Association of Chiefs of Police, January 14, 2025, letter .....                                 | 20 |
| Major County Sheriffs of America, January 10, 2025, letter .....  | 21 |
| McDaniel, Hon. Dustin, et al., former State attorneys general, January 7, 2025, letter .....                  | 22 |
| National Association of Police Organizations, January 9, 2025, letter .....                                   | 29 |
| National Fusion Center Association, January 13, 2025, letter .....  | 30 |
| National Narcotic Officers' Associations Coalition, January 10, 2025, letter .....                            | 31 |
| National Sheriffs' Association, January 13, 2025, letter .....  | 32 |
| NSSF, trade association for firearm, ammunition, hunting, and shooting sports, January 16, 2025, letter ..... | 34 |
| Wilson, Hon. Alan, et al., Republican State attorneys general, December 3, 2024, letter .....                 | 35 |

### Submitted by Ranking Member Durbin:

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, statement ..... | 39 |
| Equality California, January 13, 2025, letter .....                   | 44 |
| Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, The, statement ..... | 46 |
| Legal Defense Fund, January 15, 2025, letter .....                    | 51 |
| National Council of Jewish Women, January 13, 2025, letter .....      | 54 |
| National Fair Housing Alliance, January 15, 2025, letter .....        | 56 |
| National Women's Law Center, January 13, 2025, letter .....           | 58 |
| People For the American Way, January 14, 2025, letter .....           | 62 |
| Reproductive Freedom for All, January 9, 2025, letter .....           | 66 |
| Society for the Rule of Law, January 13, 2025, letter .....           | 70 |

