



Office of the Attorney General
Washington, D. C. 20530

August 2, 2026

A. The Attorney General's May 18, 2026 Order establishing the Anti-Weaponization Fund ("Fund") is rescinded and shall have no force or effect.

B. For the avoidance of doubt, nothing in this Order is intended to contradict or otherwise be contrary to prior representations by the Department of Justice that the Fund is not operative. No Members were appointed; no funds were transferred; no process for receiving claims was established; no claims were paid. Nevertheless, several frivolous lawsuits have been filed challenging the Fund, and at least one court has declined to dismiss those claims as moot. This Order establishes, beyond any doubt, that there is no Fund. *See Floyd v. Dep't of Justice*, 1:26-cv-1399-LMB (E.D. Va.); *Dunn v. Trump*, 1:26-cv-1719-RJL (D.D.C.); *Citizens for Resp. and Ethics in Wash. v. Dep't of Justice*, 1:26-cv-1789-RJL (D.D.C.); *Gordon v. Blanche*, 1:26-cv-1907-RJL (D.D.C.); *Gill v. Dep't of Justice*, 3:26-cv-3283-CAB (S.D. Cal.).

Todd Blanche
Acting Attorney General



Office of the Attorney General
Washington, D. C. 20530

**Department of Justice Rescinds Anti-Weaponization Order
and Addresses the May 19 Release**

The Department of Justice today announced that the Acting Attorney General rescinded the May 18, 2026 Order that established "The Anti-Weaponization Fund." Although the Acting Attorney General has repeatedly advised Congress through testimony, including under oath, as well as in written responses, that the Fund is not moving forward, and the Department has repeatedly represented to district courts that the Fund is not moving forward, today's Order officially rescinds the May 18, 2026 Order.

Further, the May 19, 2026 Order regarding a mutual release of claims applies by its terms only retroactively. Additionally, the terms "Lawfare and/or Weaponization" in that Order were already defined in the Settlement Agreement as the use of government power "to target individuals, groups, and entities for improper and unlawful political, personal, and/or ideological reasons."

The Acting Attorney General stands by all of his July 15, 2026 Senate Judiciary Committee testimony, including answers to questions asked by Senator Cornyn related to the scope and applicability of the May 19, 2026 Order. A transcript of the Acting Attorney General's testimony is attached. He incorporates that testimony by reference, and restates that it is DOJ's interpretation that the Order only has any effect, including on any release of claims, on the named parties in the lawsuit referenced in the Order.

1 THE NOMINATION OF THE HONORABLE TODD BLANCHE TO BE ATTORNEY
2 GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

3 - - -

4 WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2026

5

6 United States Senate
7 Committee on the Judiciary
8 Washington, D.C.

9 The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:01 a.m.,
10 in Room 216, Hart Senate Office Building, Hon. Chuck
11 Grassley, Chairman of the Committee, presiding.

12 Present: Senators Grassley, Cornyn, Lee, Cruz,
13 Hawley, Tillis, Kennedy, Blackburn, Schmitt, Britt, Moody,
14 Durbin, Whitehouse, Klobuchar, Coons, Blumenthal, Hirono,
15 Booker, Padilla, Welch, and Schiff.

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHUCK GRASSLEY, A U.S. SENATOR
2 FROM THE STATE OF IOWA, CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE

3

4 Chairman Grassley. We welcome everybody to this
5 hearing when we consider Todd Blanche's nomination to serve
6 as the 88th Attorney General of the United States.
7 Congratulations, Mr. Blanche, on your appointment.

8 Mr. Blanche. Thank you, Chairman.

9 Chairman Grassley. These are the ground rules for
10 this meeting. I'll handle this hearing as our Committee
11 handled the nominations of Attorneys General Bondi and
12 Garland. I want everyone to be able to watch without
13 obstruction. If people block the view of those behind them
14 or speak out of turn, it's not fair, it's not considerate,
15 so officers will immediately remove that person or persons.

16 I'm going to give my opening remarks, and then Ranking
17 Member Durbin will give his remarks, then I'll call on
18 Senator Moody to introduce the nominee. Following that
19 introduction, Mr. Blanche will provide his opening
20 statement, and then we'll turn to questions. Each senator
21 will have 10 minutes to ask questions. My standard
22 approach has been that if you got 1 second left as a member
23 of the Committee, you can ask your question, but after the
24 question's answered, I'm going to move on to the next
25 member.

1 Mr. Blanche, thank you for being here. As I've said
2 before, this is one of the most important offices in our
3 country. You went through a rough Senate confirmation a
4 little over a year ago, so you know all about it. I
5 appreciate that you cooperated with this Committee at every
6 step and fulfilled your responsibilities in good faith,
7 while simultaneously running the world's largest law
8 office.

9 The Senate has already judged your fitness for high
10 office and confirmed you as Department second in command.
11 Today, we consider you for a promotion, and we're not
12 starting out from a blank slate. You have a track record.
13 My Democrat colleagues have relentlessly attacked the
14 Department and your and President Trump's leadership.
15 They've called the Department "a disgrace" and suggest that
16 the Agency is broken. Their media allies and activist
17 networks have echoed that message. Are these assertions
18 correct? Let's put aside partisan criticism for a moment
19 and address the evidence.

20 The Department's primary duty is to enforce our
21 Nation's laws and to keep Americans safe. So, how is the
22 Department stacking up? The answer is, for those who care
23 to judge fairly, it's a record of success. The United
24 States has the lowest murder rate since 1900. The FBI has
25 captured eight of the top 10 most wanted fugitives.

1 Violent crime arrests by the FBI are up 184 percent. More
2 than 849 individuals have been disrupted from conducting
3 terrorist attacks. The ATF has seized more than 44,000
4 illegal firearms. That is not a failure.

5 What about the Department's record on illegal drugs?
6 Since January of last year, the DEA has made more than
7 6,300 fentanyl arrests, it has seized more than 5,000
8 kilograms of fentanyl powder, 55 million fentanyl pills,
9 240,000 kilograms of methamphetamine, and one-and-two-
10 tenths million kilograms of cocaine. The fentanyl alone
11 amounts to more than 428 million fatal seizures. That is
12 not a failure.

13 And what about protecting children? Our Committee has
14 fought for years on a bipartisan basis to protect our
15 Nation's children from the horrors of exploitation.
16 Ranking Member Durbin and I in a bipartisan way are leading
17 landmark legislation, the James T. Woods Act, to tackle
18 that very issue, and once again, our partners at the
19 Justice Department have a record of success. The FBI has
20 arrested 2,900 child predators and human traffickers, a 70-
21 percent increase from 2024, and located more than 6,940
22 child victims. The U.S. Marshals have recovered more than
23 1,182 missing children. That doesn't sound like failure to
24 me. In contrast, the Biden Administration diverted
25 prosecutors from child sex crime cases on January 6 cases.

1 That is unbelievable.

2 My Democrat colleagues have criticized the Justice
3 Department for a lack of transparency. I've been critical
4 as well as I am with every Administration, whoever occupies
5 the Oval Office, when we don't get that cooperation. No
6 one cares more about oversight than I do. In all my years
7 of congressional oversight, this Department has been the
8 most responsive to my requests, that means every Republican
9 or Democrat Administration previous to this one, and the
10 numbers back this up. Since January of last year, the
11 Department has produced approximately 43,000 pages of
12 records in response to requests from the Senate and the
13 House. To put that in perspective, that's approximately 3
14 times the number of records produced and equivalent time by
15 the Biden Justice Department. The Department has also
16 released more than three-and-three-tenths million pages of
17 additional records with more coming every day. Their work
18 is not done and I expect continued responsiveness and as
19 well, the very important thing of declassification, but
20 credit should be given where credit is due.

21 A few more successes. They've established the
22 National Fraud Enforcement Division to address more than \$5
23 billion in fraud against American taxpayers. They've
24 reduced the immigration case log by more than 468,000.
25 They've challenged and eliminated racist and unlawful

1 discrimination in government and the private sector.
2 They're exposing and readdressing the Biden-era
3 weaponization of the Department against political
4 opponents. They've captured and are prosecuting the
5 dictator, Nicholas Maduro, for crimes related to
6 narcoterrorism.

7 The list goes on. This Department is keeping
8 Americans safe, and the numbers back that up. Mr. Blanche,
9 you should take pride in delivering the law enforcement
10 promise the American people voted for in 2024, but at the
11 hearing today, we might expect the opposite. My Democratic
12 colleagues, they won't talk about these successes. I
13 expect the same playbook that we've seen for nearly every
14 one of President Trump's nominees: pure partisan
15 obstruction and partisan attack. This approach is the same
16 one that we've seen over and over. In fact, it becomes
17 such a pattern that I'll just quote myself from a speech I
18 delivered almost a year ago regarding another nominee.

19 Last July, I said, "Since the very beginning of this
20 Congress, Democrats have engaged in relentless obstruction
21 campaign for nearly every one of President Trump's
22 nominees. Their playbook has included maximum procedural
23 obstruction, unfair media attacks, repeated attempts to
24 allege misconduct and demands for delayed consideration,
25 records, and investigations. Like clockwork, just before a

1 hearing or a vote, we get another breathless accusation
2 that one of President Trump's nominees needs to be
3 investigated." End of my quote of last January. So, here
4 we are again, just like clockwork. The Democrats and their
5 media allies and activist networks have launched the
6 expected crusade against your nomination.

7 To be clear, there are fair questions for Mr. Blanche.
8 I don't agree with how Mr. Blanche or the Justice
9 Department has handled every matter, and I've demanded
10 answers and will continue to do so, but many of the
11 criticisms aired in recent days just completely miss the
12 mark, and I'll give one example. We've seen a coordinated
13 campaign from former Justice Department employees opposing
14 Mr. Blanche's nomination. My Democratic colleagues and the
15 partisan media have publicized their letter, framing the
16 signatories as a group of nonpartisan "career civil
17 servants."

18 Of course they failed to mention that letter was
19 coordinated by the same group that engaged in partisan and
20 misleading campaigns opposing Judge Bove's nomination.
21 They also don't mention that the letters' signatures
22 include a who's who of partisan activists, including former
23 Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot and Jack Smith's partisan
24 prosecutors, J.P. Cooney, Molly Gaston, and David Rody, and
25 they certainly don't mention that Mr. Blanche has received

1 letters of support from organizations representing more
2 than 600,000 law enforcement officers, 23 State attorneys
3 general, and scores of former Justice Department officials.

4 So, from my vantage point, if the people who engaged
5 in the worst partisan lawfare this country has ever seen
6 have a problem with Todd Blanche, that's a good thing in my
7 book. As sure as sunrise today, some of my Democrat
8 colleagues will tell us that Mr. Branch is a uniquely
9 terrible nominee. Before they do so, however, I urge them
10 to remember the boy who cried wolf and take a long look in
11 the mirror before lecturing anyone about partisanship at
12 the Justice Department.

13 So, I have one more subject. I'd like to discuss
14 developments in my and Senator Johnson's Jack Smith
15 investigation. The Smith team subpoenaed the National
16 Archives, June 2023. That subpoena sought text messages
17 from cellphones connected to Trump's White House staffers.
18 The date range for the records was October 1, 2020, to
19 January 20, 2021. The Archives' then general counsel, Gary
20 Stern, emailed Thomas Windom, one of Smith's deputies on
21 August 21, 2023, at 12:19 p.m. That email said responsive
22 records were ready. On August 21, the same day, 2023, just
23 20 seconds later, Windom had already downloaded the texts,
24 and shortly after that, other DOJ and FBI personnel
25 involved in the case did as well.

1 Whistleblowers told my office that Smith didn't pass
2 these records to a filter team, and you can see in 20
3 minutes, there wasn't time to go to a filter team. That
4 filter team was already in place. The Justice Department
5 has confirmed that fact in a letter to the Committee, "The
6 Special Counsel's investigative team apparently bypassed
7 the filter team and directly accessed these text messages."
8 The DOJ letter to the Committee also said, "The Special
9 Counsel's Office had previously been made aware of the
10 risks that records relating to members'," meaning members
11 of Congress, "communications, could raise constitutional
12 questions and might be privileged under the speech and
13 debate clause." That speech and debate clause is a
14 constitutional issue.

15 Even if Smith's team had been instructed to look for
16 congressional or other privileged information, it wouldn't
17 matter because in this example, it appears the filter team
18 was entirely bypassed. Based on the information provided
19 to the Committee, Smith's operation cut corners and blew
20 through constitutional stop signs instead of respecting
21 them and having been advised about the constitutional
22 problems. The White House messages obtained and reviewed
23 by Smith's team included communications with many senators
24 and representatives. The communications included messages
25 with members on this Committee, including this senator.

1 The subject matter of those members' communication included
2 core constitutional responsibilities, such as congressional
3 legislation, resolutions, and investigative work. It also
4 included other information irrelevant to Jack Smith's case
5 against then citizen Trump.

6 Instead of that information being walled off, it was
7 intentionally shared. This is another example how this
8 misguided investigation wasn't normal and demands further
9 investigation. Jack Smith's operation was a runaway
10 political train that improperly obtained congressional
11 information. I've requested Acting Attorney General
12 Blanche to allow members to review these records.

13 Senator Durbin.

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD J. DURBIN, A U.S. SENATOR FROM
2 THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, RANKING MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE

3

4 Senator Durbin. Thank you very much Mr. Chairman.
5 Mr. Blanche, thank you for coming by my office yesterday.
6 I think we both knew going into that meeting that we had
7 strongly held political beliefs on both sides of the table,
8 and yet we had, I think, a respectful exchange, and I thank
9 you for coming by.

10 Mr. Blanche. Thank you.

11 Senator Durbin. I'm glad you brought your staffers
12 with you. My staff was there as well. If there was any
13 misunderstanding, my representation of your remarks, you'll
14 have a chance to correct the record in a few moments, but
15 I'll do my best to stick by what I said, and as my staff
16 has backed me up and in my memory of it, yours may be
17 different.

18 Mr. Blanche. Thank you.

19 Senator Durbin. But thank you for meeting with me
20 yesterday.

21 I want to acknowledge the obviously empty seat at the
22 dais next to the Chairman. The Committee is mourning the
23 loss of our friend and colleague, Senator Lindsey Graham,
24 former Chairman and Ranking Member of this Committee. I
25 served on the Committee with Senator Graham since he joined

1 the Senate in 2003. I'm going to cherish my memories of
2 both our fierce partisan battles and our landmark
3 bipartisan agreements. He was a trusted friend. My
4 friends and family back home can't believe it when I say
5 these things. "You mean that Lindsey Graham?" Yes, I do.
6 He was a good person, a valuable part of the Senate family,
7 and an extremely valuable part of this Committee. I'm glad
8 that we're honoring him with this memorial today.

9 Let me say at the outset that the Chairman spent
10 several minutes talking about Jack Smith. I want to make
11 one thing clear about Jack Smith, who was a special
12 counsel. Months ago, perhaps 6 months ago, maybe longer,
13 he volunteered to appear before this Committee under oath
14 and testify about what he did as special counsel and to
15 answer the questions of the Committee. For reasons I
16 cannot explain, the Republican majority does not want to
17 bring Jack Smith before this Committee and have him testify
18 under oath. They continue on regular basis to take
19 exception to things that he said or did or allegedly did,
20 but will not bring him before this Committee. I don't get
21 it. If they have something they want to raise with Jack
22 Smith, that place is where he should be sitting under oath
23 and answering the questions, and he's volunteered to do it,
24 but they turned him down.

25 Mr. Chairman, we are here today with the awesome

1 responsibility of choosing the next Attorney General of the
2 United States of America. We're here because there's a
3 vacancy in the office. The President decided to fire the
4 predecessor of Mr. Blanche after just 14 months on the job,
5 after courts and grand juries blocked her from prosecuting
6 the President's political opponents. Seemingly, President
7 Trump believes you, Mr. Blanche, will be more successful.
8 When you were first nominated to be Deputy Attorney
9 General, Democrats raised concerns about the President's
10 personal attorney serving as the top attorney in the
11 Justice Department.

12 The Attorney General is the chief law enforcement
13 officer of the United States of America. Since you were
14 confirmed, the Department of Justice has literally violated
15 dozens of court orders to advance the President's agenda.
16 Last year, you declared that the Justice Department was "at
17 war with the Federal judiciary." I brought that up to you
18 yesterday. I believe all of us, both sides of the table,
19 need to be more careful with our rhetoric when it comes to
20 the judiciary. Yesterday, we had the testimony of Justices
21 Kagan and Barrett, and they talked about the impact on them
22 personally and on their families with the threats that have
23 been increasing against them physically. Most of us on
24 this side of the table know what they're talking about. We
25 have a similar experience, but it is a responsibility of

1 all of us, Democrats and Republicans, liberals and
2 conservatives, in or out of the government, to be careful
3 with what we say about the judiciary. They're doing their
4 job. We should never, ever countenance as violence against
5 anyone on either side.

6 One of your first official actions as Acting Attorney
7 General, Mr. Blanche, was to establish the \$2 billion
8 weaponization or slush fund to benefit January 6 cop
9 beaters while immunizing President Trump from IRS
10 liability. You defended the slush fund by claiming,
11 "People who hurt police get money all the time." Despite
12 resounding bipartisan criticism and admitting that it was a
13 mistake, you've refused to rescind the order creating this
14 fund. That order can still be found on the Department of
15 Justice's website today.

16 We talked about this yesterday in my office. I didn't
17 quite understand your explanation. I'll give you a chance,
18 of course, to explain it, but you said it was up to
19 Congress to codify the elimination of this fund. This was
20 a creation of the executive branch, it was not a creation
21 of Congress, so I hope you'll clarify that statement.
22 Earlier this week, a Federal judge characterized your
23 explanation of the settlement that led to this fund "at
24 best misleading, and at worst, disingenuous." You told me
25 yesterday that the opinion was "a hit piece on you,"

1 another troubling attack on a judge for doing her job.

2 Then there's a coverup of the Epstein files which
3 former Attorney General Bondi herself said you were "in
4 charge of." Under your leadership, more than 1,000 FBI
5 personnel were pulled off of other priorities and directed
6 to flag Epstein records for any mentions of President
7 Trump. When scrutiny of the coverup intensified, you
8 participated in meetings in the White House Situation Room
9 to strategize about how to protect President Trump -- not
10 Epstein survivors; the President. When Congress forced the
11 Administration to release the files, hundreds of survivors'
12 personal information was unredacted, victimizing them
13 again. Meanwhile, the names of powerful Epstein allies
14 remained protected in clear violation of the Epstein Files
15 Transparency Act.

16 Your explanation: it isn't a crime to party with Mr.
17 Epstein. Mr. Blanche, these survivors deserve much better.
18 I want to recognize many of them who are in the audience
19 today. I thank them for their courage in speaking out.
20 Tomorrow, we will hear one of them during our outside
21 witness panel.

22 I'd like to enter into the record six letters from
23 Epstein survivors in opposition to the Blanche nomination.

24 Chairman Grassley. Without objection so ordered.

25 [The letters appear in the appendix:]

1 / COMMITTEE INSERT

2 Senator Durbin. I'm asking you, Mr. Blanche, today
3 before you leave this room, to agree to meet with these
4 Epstein survivors personally and to bring with you
5 professionals from the Department of Justice to hear them
6 out. They have the courage to tell their story, and they
7 should at least hear from their government that they take
8 it seriously. After your interview with convicted sex
9 trafficker, Ghislaine Maxwell, in an attempt, I believe, to
10 exonerate President Trump, Ms. Maxwell was transferred to a
11 minimum security camp that is unheard of for offenders like
12 her. You said it was for her own personal safety. I hope
13 you'll explain that today.

14 You told me yesterday you want to be Attorney General
15 because you love the Department of Justice and you love
16 prosecutors, but you have removed from the Department some
17 of the most effective prosecutors that have ever served our
18 government, done that for personal reasons, purging career
19 law enforcement officials who won't prioritize President
20 Trump's interest over their oath to the Constitution. You
21 fired the career pardon attorney because she wouldn't sign
22 off on restoring gun rights to a convicted domestic abuser,
23 Mel Gibson, personal friend of President Trump. You fired
24 career immigration litigator, Erez Reuveni, for refusing to
25 follow unethical orders from your former law partner, Emil

1 Bove, and other senior DOJ officials to lie to a Federal
2 court.

3 You bragged about firing career law enforcement
4 professionals simply because they were assigned to
5 investigate the President's criminal misconduct, including
6 FBI agents who specialized in investigating threats from
7 foreign adversaries like Iran. More than 1,200 former
8 career DOJ employees, who worked for both Republican and
9 Democratic Administrations, sent this Committee a letter
10 opposing your nomination because you have purged DOJ of
11 thousands of experienced law enforcement officials, putting
12 our Nation's security at risk.

13 I would like to enter this letter into the record with
14 unanimous consent.

15 Chairman Grassley. Without objection, so ordered.

16 [The letter appears in the appendix:]

17 / COMMITTEE INSERT

18 Senator Durbin. You testified under oath last year
19 that as Deputy Attorney General, you would consult with
20 career ethics officials to avoid conflicts of interest, a
21 significant concern since you received nearly \$10 million
22 as a President's personal attorney, but you've gutted the
23 DOJ offices that handle ethics and professional
24 responsibility. After the Department's top career ethics
25 lawyer advised you to recuse yourself from any matters

1 relating to Trump in his personal capacity, that lawyer was
2 fired. Every smarmy suspect deal in this Administration
3 has cryptocurrency behind the curtain, and again, it has
4 happened when it comes to the billion-dollar windfall that
5 went to the President in his first year in office.

6 Shortly after you were confirmed as Deputy Attorney
7 General, you issued an order dismantling DOJ's crypto
8 enforcement team and shutting down ongoing criminal
9 investigations of the crypto industry. At the time, you
10 owned at least \$159,000 worth of crypto-related assets.
11 While you eventually divested, those assets didn't go far.
12 You simply transferred them to your children and
13 grandchild. With the Crypto Enforcement Unit out of the
14 way, President Trump brought in \$1.4 billion from his
15 family's cryptocurrency business in 2025 alone.

16 Take one example of the dealing in the Administration.
17 In April 2024, the founder of the crypto company, Binance,
18 was sentenced to prison and ordered to pay a \$50 million
19 fine for a money laundering scheme. Fifty million dollar
20 fine. He then brokered a deal to channel \$2 billion into
21 the Trump family's crypto business, World Liberty Finance,
22 after which President Trump pardoned him. Binance accounts
23 have funneled about \$1.7 billion to Iranian entities linked
24 to terrorism. The President's World Liberty Financial
25 continues to partner with Binance, even with these facts

1 that I've spelled out in this statement.

2 You recently claimed, Mr. Blanche, that "There's a ton
3 of evidence that the 2020 election was rigged." You should
4 see what happens in this Committee room when judicial
5 nominees of this Administration appear before this
6 Committee raise their hands, take the oath, and then field
7 the questions asked by members of the Committee. You'll
8 see some of the people, who are even judges today at State
9 level and have distinguished careers in law, start to avert
10 their eyes, squirm, and then give a script which doesn't
11 acknowledge the obvious. Donald Trump lost the 2020
12 election by 7 million popular votes -- 7 million popular
13 vote -- and he lost by that number. That's a fact. Any
14 8th grader in America knows it and can repeat it for you.
15 And yet when it comes down to asking Trump judicial
16 nominees who won the 2020 election, you ought to see them
17 squirm.

18 What's the reason? The President's Big Lie. He
19 believes in his heart of hearts that he somehow won that
20 election, though he can't produce any evidence of that
21 fact. Well, we'll give you your chance. I hope that you
22 produce the evidence to show one way or the other that the
23 Big Lie is the truth or not the truth.

24 Your first indictment of former FBI Director Comey
25 failed in a case brought by an unqualified and unlawfully

1 appointed U.S. Attorney, Lindsay Halligan. So, now Mr.
2 Comey is being prosecuted for taking pictures of seashells,
3 this prosecution personally ordered by the President who
4 despises Mr. Comey for overseeing the investigation of
5 Russian interference in the 2016 election. You have also
6 baselessly indicted the Southern Poverty Law Center, a
7 civil rights organization that has worked tirelessly to
8 expose violent extremists like the Proud Boys and Oath
9 Keepers, a group which we and the Senate know well for
10 their January 6 escapade, the same people you gave a clean
11 slate for their role in attacking this Capitol.

12 A Federal judge recently singled out your "remarkable
13 statements" targeting Kilmar Abrego Garcia as evidence that
14 his criminal prosecution was "marked by a retaliatory taint
15 for successfully fighting his deportation." And despite my
16 repeated requests, you've yet to produce the DOJ memorandum
17 concluding that it was legally permissible for the
18 President of the United States to accept a gift of a luxury
19 airliner from the royal family of Qatar, despite
20 constitutional and statutory foreign gift prohibitions.
21 Earlier this month, that jet was launched as Air Force One,
22 despite credible reports of security vulnerability. Last
23 weekend, the Department of Justice responded not by
24 addressing these concerns, but by sending Federal agents
25 with subpoenas to the homes of the reporters who exposed

1 these lapses.

2 In less than 18 months at the Department of Justice,
3 you have shown you're still President Trump's personal
4 attorney. Your tenure can be summed up in the four words
5 you said -- "I love you, sir" -- to President Trump. This
6 was your response when you were asked what you would say to
7 him. This Nation deserves an Attorney General who loves
8 the Constitution more than any single President, an
9 Attorney General focused on keeping America safe and
10 combating corruption, not satisfying the President's
11 personal grievances or channeling crypto cash to the
12 Administration's MAGA faithful.

13 Mr. Chairman, I yield.

14 Chairman Grassley. Thank you.

15 [The prepared statement of Senator Durbin appears in
16 the appendix.]

17 / COMMITTEE INSERT

18 Chairman Grassley. Now, we'll turn to Senator Moody
19 to give her introduction of the nominee. Senator Moody.

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 STATEMENT OF HON. ASHLEY MOODY, A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE
2 STATE OF FLORIDA

3

4 Senator Moody. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
5 and my goodness, I expect you'll be getting a lot of
6 questions about how one person may influence every decision
7 you make and unduly influence everything you do. And I
8 hope you say you are absolutely right, and it is that
9 granddaughter sitting right behind you. She is the cutest
10 thing I've ever seen.

11 Good morning, everyone. Thank you for being here. I
12 have the distinct pleasure of introducing Acting Attorney
13 General Todd Blanche. He serves and has served as our
14 Acting Attorney General and our Deputy Attorney General.
15 And amongst all of the questioning today, most of which I
16 hope is in good faith, sometimes it gets lost that he is a
17 former prosecutor and dedicated his life to prosecuting for
18 this Nation. The greatest testament to his good character
19 and wise judgment is he is now a Floridian and my
20 constituent as the newest senator from the great State of
21 Florida.

22 But he has led a very distinguished career within the
23 realm of the Department of Justice of which he now seeks to
24 head as the permanent Attorney General, and before I go
25 more into that, I want to thank you, Mr. Blanche, for

1 offering yourself not just, first, as Deputy Attorney
2 General, but now as Acting Attorney General. Any one of us
3 on either side of the aisle sitting here today knows what
4 it means to serve and what comes with that, and what that
5 takes every day, and certainly what that means for your
6 families that stand beside and behind you and sometimes
7 hold you up throughout the process. We thank you, and we
8 thank your family that is here today.

9 Since President Trump took office and leadership,
10 including you, entered the Department of Justice, as you
11 heard our Chairman say, you have worked to achieve the
12 lowest murder rate since 1900. Violent crime arrests are
13 up 184 percent. Over 2,400 gangs and criminal enterprises
14 have been disrupted and dismantled. Twenty-nine hundred,
15 almost 3,000 child predators and human traffickers have
16 been arrested. That is an increase of 70 percent since
17 2024.

18 And when it comes to fighting for a fentanyl-free
19 America, which we both appeared at a summit this week, you
20 and the Department are excelling there, too. DOJ has made
21 over 6,300 fentanyl arrests, seized more than 5,000
22 kilograms of fentanyl powder, 55 million fentanyl pills.
23 That is fatal doses enough to kill 428 million people. And
24 just so that everybody understands what that means, that is
25 more than the population of the United States of America.

1 That's just a few top line numbers on core operations
2 at the heart of DOJ's mission. The DOJ is indeed in the
3 driver's seat of the war on fraud, and I hope members on
4 both sides of the dais will give you time to talk about
5 that today, not only for their consideration of your
6 nomination, but also so the American people can hear about
7 that.

8 I know that you are in for a long process today, so I
9 want to take my remaining time to talk about you, the
10 person, your career, Todd Blanche. Acting Attorney General
11 Todd Blanche is a patriot who was raised in the Department
12 of Justice. He spent nearly a decade in what is recognized
13 as one of the best prosecuting offices in the country, the
14 U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New
15 York, where he prosecuted drug traffickers and violent
16 criminals. In fact, this career dedicated to justice and
17 the rule of law started even before that. He started at
18 the Department of Justice as a paralegal. I love that
19 story, how you started there and you worked your way
20 through the ranks, and it was always about hard work.
21 Throughout time, he didn't just clock in and clock out. He
22 did really good work, such good work that he was noticed
23 routinely and honored for his commitment to excellence.

24 In 2011, while he was at the U.S. Attorney's Office
25 for the Southern District of New York, he received the

1 Director's Award for superior performance as an Assistant
2 U.S. Attorney in the Criminal Division. In 2013, he
3 received the Federal Drug Agents Foundation's True American
4 Hero Award. He received the New York City Police
5 Department commendation 3 different years, he received the
6 U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration commendation 2
7 different years, and a commendation from the FBI 2 separate
8 years. And to round out this collection, he received
9 recognition from the ATF in 3 years.

10 I think this is emblematic of a career that was really
11 spent doing the work of the people and trying to do it
12 well, keeping his head down without seeking recognition,
13 but he couldn't help but get it because of the work and the
14 superior performance that he was doing. And I really think
15 that's an example for anyone watching today, anyone in this
16 audience, any young person at home, any young lawyer: do
17 good work; put your head down. You are evidence of that.
18 You do good work, you do a job well done, and you get
19 noticed for that, and opportunities will seek you out,
20 commendations will seek you out more than networking,
21 political connections, anything like that. It is that in
22 which people will seek you out to serve, and it may be just
23 that job well done that got you recognized by the President
24 of the United States and completely changed your life.

25 Some members will try to hold that against you today.

1 They will ignore that long career and every commendation
2 that you received before you ever met or served or acted as
3 an attorney for the President. They'll ignore all those
4 orders, and they'll gnash their teeth because they don't
5 like one man, and I believe that misses the mark. It
6 completely ignores the fact that the reason you stepped up
7 to serve is because you love this country. You dedicated
8 your career to the Department of Justice and, in fact, you
9 lived out the motto in Latin. I will not say the Latin
10 because no one will understand that, but I will say the
11 motto of the Department of Justice is, "Who prosecutes on
12 behalf of justice," not who prosecutes on behalf of a
13 political agenda or to target someone: who prosecutes on
14 behalf of justice, and you stood up and took on that
15 responsibility.

16 And so, I hope today's questions will focus on
17 allowing you to explain the legal positions of the
18 Department that you've been a part of or why you've made
19 certain positions in cases or compliance with orders, all
20 things that might go towards how you will perform on behalf
21 of this great Nation and the people you serve, how you will
22 excel as an Attorney General. But I suspect that nuance
23 and good faith will be the price paid for clips and likes
24 by some members in this room. I hope today is the
25 exception.

1 Nonetheless, I thank you for stepping up to serve
2 acting as the Attorney General in this time in which we are
3 seeking for your formal nomination. I thank you for being
4 willing to take on, not only this nomination process, but
5 the job itself because that will be an enormous
6 responsibility, not only to the Department of Justice and
7 the people that work there, but for the American citizens
8 in this country moving forward. So, I thank you very much,
9 and with that, Mr. Chairman, I introduce --

10 Chairman Grassley. Thank you, Senator.

11 Senator Moody. -- Mr. Todd Blanche as President
12 Trump's nominee.

13 [The prepared statement of Senator Moody appears in
14 the appendix.]

15 / COMMITTEE INSERT

16 Chairman Grassley. Thank you, Senator Moody. Would
17 you please stand at this point and respond to this oath?

18 (Witness sworn.)

19 Chairman Grassley. Thank you for your positive
20 response. Now, it's up to you to take what time you want
21 to make a statement and introduce any people you have with
22 you.

23

24

25

1 STATEMENT OF TODD BLANCHE, TO BE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE
2 UNITED STATES

3

4 Mr. Blanche. Thank you. Thank you very much,
5 Chairman Grassley, and thank you, Senator, for that
6 introduction. I appreciate you and your friendship.

7 Good morning, Chairman Grassley, Ranking Member
8 Durbin, and the other members of the Committee. Thank you
9 for having me. As Senator Durbin said a minute ago, I
10 would like to offer each of you my condolences for the loss
11 of your colleague, Senator Graham. He was a patriot and a
12 friend to so many of us. It's a loss for the American
13 people, and I think honoring him today and as he's been
14 honored for the past several days is the right thing to do.

15 Seventeen months ago, I sat at this table as the
16 nominee to be the Deputy Attorney General, and I told you
17 that serving in the Department of Justice was my American
18 Dream. Since then, I've helped lead it, first, as Deputy
19 and now as Acting Attorney General, and I'm here today to
20 earn your trust once more.

21 I've lived the American Dream. I waited tables to get
22 through college, moved to New York with my wife and two
23 young kids, went to law school at night, read textbooks on
24 the late train home while I worked days as a paralegal at
25 the U.S. Attorney's Office. From that start, I became a

1 prosecutor and spent 9 years prosecuting violent gangs and
2 drug dealers. I rose through the ranks of the Department
3 of Justice as a line prosecutor, then a division chief,
4 then as of last year, Deputy Attorney General, and now
5 Acting Attorney General, but I did not take that path for a
6 title. I took it to make a difference for American
7 families and the towns they call home.

8 I am exceedingly grateful to President Trump for his
9 trust and to my family who have carried me through every
10 long day and late night. My wife, Kristine; our wonderful
11 children, Sydney and Justin; my granddaughter, Blaine,
12 who's here today -- all of them are here today -- wonderful
13 friends, many of whom are here today, are really what make
14 this worth it and what gets me through my days. And so, I
15 want to thank them for not only being here today and
16 supporting me, but also being with me every step of the way
17 of the journey that we're on together.

18 My family's blessings should be available to all
19 Americans. When a family can send their kids to school,
20 walk their neighborhood after dark, and build a life
21 without fear, every promise of the American Dream is within
22 reach. When they cannot, none of it is. That's my job:
23 securing safety for every American. I'm pleased to testify
24 again today to tell everybody here that we are doing just
25 that. We are keeping America safe.

1 Since President Trump took office -- it's been said a
2 few times this morning already, but it bears repeating --
3 murders are down roughly 20 percent nationwide. We have
4 the lowest murder rate since 1900. Violent crime arrests
5 are up nearly 114 percent. We've taken almost 5,000 child
6 predators and human traffickers off the streets, and the
7 Department of Justice has filed nearly 100,000 indictments
8 and informations since January 20, 2025. Additionally, in
9 just the last 4 weeks, in just the last month, we've paid
10 \$96 million in claims through the Public Safety Officers
11 Benefits Program to eligible surviving families of fallen
12 public safety officers, even while fewer law enforcement
13 officers were killed in the line of duty than the prior
14 years.

15 And obviously these are not just numbers. Each one is
16 a family that still has its son or daughter and an officer
17 who came home for dinner. If you look at Washington and
18 Memphis as examples, where we have worked with Federal,
19 State, and local partners pulling thousands of criminals
20 off the streets in those two cities, homicides in D.C. are
21 down about 60 percent, and overall crime in Memphis
22 declined by more than 40 percent. We've seized thousands
23 of illegal guns, brought more than 150 missing children
24 home in those two cities, and cleaned up parks and spaces
25 family once avoided so you can take your kids and loved

1 ones there once again.

2 We are enforcing our borders. We are prosecuting the
3 smugglers who profited from an open border, removing
4 criminal aliens, and dismantling gangs like MS-13 and TDA.
5 We're smashing the cartels and any of the scourge of drugs
6 in our communities. We designated the major cartels as
7 foreign terrorist organizations because that's exactly what
8 they are, and we're using every tool that unlocked:
9 narcoterrorism charges, forfeiture, and extraditions.
10 Dozens of cartel leaders are now in American custody, drug
11 seizures are skyrocketing, and overdose deaths are finally
12 falling.

13 We are protecting taxpayers. Last year, the
14 Department brought the largest healthcare fraud takedown in
15 American history, more than \$14 billion, and another \$11
16 billion in total fraud in just the last 3 months. That's
17 money stolen from the fisc, stolen from Medicare, from
18 seniors, working families, and we're clawing it back.
19 We're doing all of this, I will add, through partnership:
20 Federal agents, State troopers, county sheriffs, local
21 officers and State attorneys general in your home States
22 all pulling in the same direction. That is what happens
23 when we fight crime together, and I want to bring that
24 model that we've done in a few towns to more communities in
25 every State.

1 Above all, we are restoring American trust. In recent
2 years, we watched the Justice Department turned against
3 many of you and a former President, and it damaged the
4 public's faith in justice. We are fixing that. Members of
5 this Committee on both sides have fair questions about the
6 hard debates of the past year, and I welcome them. I'm
7 proud of what we've done to help American families see
8 safer streets and to have a fair shot at the life they're
9 working to build. None of this is a Republican or Democrat
10 issue. Every senator here has constituents who just want
11 to be safe. The men and women of this Department are the
12 finest people I have ever worked with, and leading them is
13 the honor of my professional life. We are keeping America
14 safe, and we are just getting started. I love this
15 country. I love the Department of Justice.

16 Thank you very much, Chairman, for the opportunity to
17 appear before this Committee today, and I look forward to
18 answering your questions. Thank you.

19 [The prepared statement of Mr. Blanche appears in the
20 appendix.]

21 / COMMITTEE INSERT

22 Chairman Grassley. Thank you for that testimony, and
23 we'll now have our 10-minute rounds of questioning. I'll
24 start and then the Senator from Illinois.

25 I've long been concerned about concentration and

1 anticompetitive conduct in healthcare technology, but
2 particularly in agriculture, family farmers deserve fair
3 prices. I held a hearing on anticompetitive activities in
4 this Committee last October on the subject of agriculture.
5 As I recall, as a result of that hearing, the President
6 issued an executive order and an investigation was started
7 in your Department, and I've sensed some pause in that
8 right now. So, if confirmed, do you have a commitment that
9 the Justice Department will make antitrust enforcement a
10 priority? And since I think there aren't too many people
11 in the Justice Department who know much about agriculture,
12 with some concentration on agriculture.

13 Mr. Blanche. Chairman, absolutely. You're right,
14 President Trump issued an executive order. I have worked
15 already closely with Secretary Rollins on this very issue.
16 We recently held a press conference announcing some of the
17 work that we're doing to not only deal with the
18 anticompetitive behavior that we've seen, but also to help
19 ease prices in the cattle market around the country. So,
20 yes, Chairman, I commit to that.

21 Chairman Grassley. Our Committee has received a lot
22 of outreach about the Department's litigation position in
23 Louisiana v. FDA. The plaintiffs in this case challenged
24 the relaxed regulation governing mail order abortion drugs.
25 Can you tell the Committee about this case and explain what

1 the Department's doing?

2 Mr. Blanche. Chairman, first, President Trump is the
3 most pro-life President in history, and the work that this
4 Department's doing in that space is something that hasn't
5 been done for 10 years. For the first time in a decade,
6 HHS and the FDA are actually taking a real look at what's
7 happening with some of these abortion pills and whether
8 they're actually safe or not. As it relates to the
9 litigation you referenced, it would be wrong for me to talk
10 about any litigation strategy beyond what's in our briefs,
11 but suffice to say, Chairman, that as we talk about in our
12 briefs, we are not in any way defending what Biden and what
13 his Administration did with respect to that judge, but
14 beyond that, I don't want to comment on the strategy about
15 that litigation.

16 Chairman Grassley. This Committee has also received
17 outreach concerning the Department's handling of the
18 investigation and release of Epstein files and your role in
19 it. Some allegations include problematic redactions,
20 insufficient effort to follow investigative leads, a
21 refusal to meet with victims, and questions regarding the
22 transfer of Maxwell to a lower-security prison. I want you
23 to take the opportunity to respond to these allegations.
24 What would you like this Committee to know regarding these
25 files?

1 Mr. Blanche. President Trump signed the Epstein
2 Transparency Act. The Department of Justice undertook a
3 Herculean task to review millions and millions of
4 potentially responsive files. We were required under the
5 statute to do this expeditiously and very quickly. The
6 Department of Justice did so. We reviewed over 6 million
7 pages. Many of these pages were not responsive, and what I
8 mean by that is we intentionally over collected potentially
9 responsive documents. So, for example, there was a case
10 going on in Florida at the same time as the Jeffrey Epstein
11 case involving another defendant named Epstein having
12 nothing to do with Jeffrey Epstein. When we collected
13 materials, we collected everything involving Epstein,
14 including the Epstein that had nothing to do with Jeffrey
15 Epstein. So, the review of materials included
16 nonresponsive materials.

17 The reviewers were qualified, experienced attorneys
18 within the Department and the FBI. They took pains to
19 apply appropriate redactions. There were mistakes that
20 were made. And so, approximately 1 percent of the
21 redactions had to be fixed after we released the Epstein
22 files. Chairman, we had dozens of lawyers on call 24/7.
23 Whenever we learned that any victim's name had been
24 improperly not redacted, we immediately took the document
25 down and fixed it as soon as we could. That doesn't excuse

1 the mistakes of which I take responsibility, but it does
2 mean that we tried to fix them. We complied with the act.
3 It required us complying with judge's rules in New York,
4 which required us to redact certain victims' names. Even
5 if the victim was also somebody who participated in
6 criminal conduct, judges in New York did not allow us to
7 un-redact those names.

8 The other thing that we did, Chairman, is we made
9 unredacted versions of the entire database available to
10 everybody in this body, and we did that because of
11 transparency. Remember, for 4 years, there wasn't a peep
12 about Jeffrey Epstein. The Biden Administration did
13 nothing to be transparent about the Epstein case. We have
14 been extraordinarily transparent in not only producing the
15 records, but letting unredacted versions be available to
16 anybody in this body. And if after reviewing unredacted
17 materials, a member had concerns about why something was
18 redacted, they brought them to the Department's attention,
19 and we addressed that. So, I want to make sure the
20 American people know that this Administration, when it
21 comes to Jeffrey Epstein, has been more transparent than
22 any past Administration, than Biden was or anybody else.
23 And what we did is we complied with the law, and if we
24 learn of new material, we will most certainly review it and
25 make it available.

1 When it comes to the victims of this horrible man, we
2 will never -- never -- not talk to victims. We will never
3 not do everything we can to prosecute anybody that
4 committed any crimes against any of these women. So, that
5 narrative is false. We have spoken with over 30
6 representatives of dozens and dozens of victims since this
7 process started. Any victim, if they're here today, I
8 would encourage them or their lawyers to meet with the FBI.
9 We will 100 percent investigate. There are no closed
10 investigations. If we learn today, if we learn next week,
11 if we learn next month that there's an individual that we
12 can investigate, indict, and prosecute out of the Epstein
13 files, you better believe it, we will. And so, we worked
14 hard, the hardworking lawyers within the Department, to do
15 the right thing to comply with the act, and we did, and
16 we'll continue to do so, Chairman.

17 Chairman Grassley. Jack Smith and his team possessed
18 and reviewed congressional information and other sensitive
19 materials when they shouldn't have, and they were advised
20 not to. Describe the steps you've taken to impose
21 accountability so that this egregious and partisan
22 misconduct never happens again.

23 Mr. Blanche. The biggest thing we can do, Chairman,
24 is be transparent about what happened, and that requires us
25 doing a check on ourselves and on the work that happened

1 before us, and being transparent with this body and
2 providing records to you. I think when the American people
3 understand and learn what happened and the egregious abuses
4 that happened, it will be a check on making sure it never
5 happens again. We strive every day to not only move
6 forward as a Department doing the right thing, but to make
7 sure that anything that happened in the past, whether it's
8 releasing emails or admitting to things that we did and the
9 Department did that we shouldn't have done, to being
10 transparent with the American people about that, that's the
11 best we can do, and that's what we're doing.

12 Chairman Grassley. I made messages public between
13 Jack Smith's office that appeared to relate to the Trump
14 classified document case. Those messages showed government
15 personnel left open a classified facility and potentially
16 mishandled classified information, causing a security
17 violation. As defense counsel to Trump, did the government
18 apprise you of these issues, and secondly, did the Biden
19 Justice Administration do any investigation into this
20 misconduct?

21 Mr. Blanche. We were never advised at that time when
22 I was defense counsel to President Trump, and I'm not aware
23 of any investigation that was started for that alleged
24 conduct.

25 Chairman Grassley. The Justice Department must do a

1 full and complete investigation into this matter.

2 This will probably have to be my last question. On
3 March 15 this year, I made public a signed and sworn
4 statement from an FBI official. That statement says two
5 important things: Special Counsel Mueller's team lacked a
6 legal basis to pursue a FISA renewal of Walid Phares and
7 investigate Thomas Barrack, but did so anyway. What steps
8 have you taken to investigate these very troubling criminal
9 allegations, and if you haven't taken any action, why not?

10 Mr. Blanche. We are investigating that, Chairman, and
11 it would be inappropriate in this setting to get into the
12 details of that investigation, but the sworn affidavit that
13 we reviewed that you provided does raise serious
14 allegations, yes.

15 Chairman Grassley. Thank you very much. Senator
16 Durbin.

17 Senator Durbin. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.
18 Mr. Blanche, I have a few questions I'd like to ask you.
19 Is it not true that Congress had to pass a law requiring
20 the Trump Administration to disclose the Epstein files, the
21 Epstein Files Transparency Act passed by bipartisan roll
22 calls in the House and Senate, to finally get the files
23 made public?

24 Mr. Blanche. President Trump signed that law, yes.

25 Senator Durbin. And of course he did after

1 overwhelming numbers of the House members and Senate
2 members voted for it on a bipartisan basis because the
3 Administration would not voluntarily produce these
4 documents. Now, I've mentioned --

5 Mr. Blanche. That's not true.

6 Senator Durbin. Well, what part of it isn't true?

7 Mr. Blanche. We were prohibited by law from producing
8 those documents. This is the Judiciary Committee. There
9 are laws that did not allow us to produce those documents,
10 which we made plain in numerous court filings. And
11 President Trump had said from day one to release the files,
12 even when he was running, and so, yes, he signed it into
13 law, and we complied with it.

14 Senator Durbin. I remember and everyone in the
15 audience remembers the lengths that the Administration went
16 through to delay production of these documents to the point
17 where Congress did an extraordinary thing: discharge
18 motion in the House to bring this matter before them and
19 vote on a bipartisan basis to compel your Administration to
20 disclose those documents.

21 Let me talk to you for a moment about the survivors
22 who are in the room. There are 10 individuals who were
23 exploited and abused by Mr. Epstein. They are here today.
24 None of them have had a chance to speak to anyone in the
25 Department or FBI, though they've asked repeatedly. So,

1 can I get your word under oath that within the next 30
2 days, you will personally sit down with these 10 victims
3 and hear their case in terms of what needs to be done by
4 the Department of Justice?

5 Mr. Blanche. Chairman, I appreciate them being here
6 today. I also have somebody from my office who's spent her
7 entire career working on cases like Mr. Epstein's. She's
8 in charge of our task force investigating human
9 trafficking. She's available to talk to them as soon as
10 today.

11 Senator Durbin. She can sit right next to you. She
12 can sit right next to you when you meet with these
13 survivors.

14 Mr. Blanche. I have never said I will not meet with
15 survivors. I am --

16 Senator Durbin. Will you meet with these 10
17 survivors? I'm asking you on the record.

18 Mr. Blanche. If they have lawyers, as you know, I'm
19 prohibited from meeting directly with them. I have met
20 with counsel for survivors as has many people in the
21 Department of Justice --

22 Senator Schiff. So, you --

23 Mr. Blanche. -- over 30, but if they are represented
24 by counsel, we will work with their counsel. If they don't
25 have a lawyer, I will certainly make arrangements to make

1 sure the right people at the Department of Justice meet
2 with them, absolutely.

3 Senator Durbin. Will you get it done? Will you get
4 it done within the next 30 days that each of these
5 survivors --

6 Mr. Blanche. I will get it done today if that's
7 necessary. My point is there's somebody here who can meet
8 with them today, get their information, and arrange to meet
9 with them, absolutely.

10 Senator Durbin. I think you ought be in the room.

11 Mr. Blanche. Pardon me?

12 Senator Durbin. I think you ought to be in the room
13 because you ought to hear this. You have singular
14 responsibility for these files. There's a delay in meeting
15 the statutory requirement of disclosure. You were involved
16 in that. I think you ought to be part of this and --

17 [Cross-talking.]

18 Mr. Blanche. I am definitely part of it, and I have
19 been from day one.

20 Senator Durbin. And it will be done within the next
21 30 days?

22 Mr. Blanche. I can keep on repeating myself, but I
23 said it could get done as soon as today. It could have
24 gotten done last week. We remain available to meet with
25 any victim or their representative at any time.

1 Senator Durbin. Will you notify the Committee when
2 you've done this?

3 Mr. Blanche. That would be prohibited by law if
4 they're talking about an ongoing investigation.

5 Senator Durbin. I'm asking you if you'll notify the
6 Committee that you met with the survivors?

7 Mr. Blanche. It depends on what they said. I'm not
8 sure I'm allowed to notify you if there's an ongoing
9 investigation.

10 Senator Durbin. Well, you're dancing on the head of a
11 pin here.

12 Mr. Blanche. I'm not dancing on any pin at all.

13 Senator Durbin. You have these survivors who have the
14 courage to come before this Committee, have the courage to
15 tell their terrible stories, how they were exploited.
16 Don't you think it's important that we have a prompt
17 response by our government to these survivors?

18 Mr. Blanche. Absolutely, and there will be a prompt
19 response.

20 Senator Durbin. And you --

21 Mr. Blanche. My heart breaks for every survivor --

22 Senator Durbin. Well --

23 Mr. Blanche. -- every victim of Mr. Epstein,
24 absolutely, and I would love to prosecute anybody that did
25 any harm to these victims, so absolutely.

1 Senator Durbin. Will you meet with them within the
2 next 30 days? It's the last time I asked a question. You
3 can say yes or no.

4 Mr. Blanche. I keep on answering it the same way. I
5 can meet with them. My staff will meet with them. We have
6 a staff member here today who specializes --

7 Senator Durbin. If you can meet with them, will you
8 meet with them?

9 Mr. Blanche. I'm not sure what you're looking for me
10 to say. As I said, there are --

11 Senator Durbin. Yes --

12 [Cross-talking.]

13 Mr. Blanche. If they're represented by counsel, I'm
14 not allowed to meet with them directly, as you know. I
15 assure you the FBI who are experts in this space,
16 prosecutors who are experts in this space, and me if
17 necessary, will absolutely meet with them. I promise you
18 this.

19 Senator Durbin. I think it's necessary.

20 Mr. Blanche. I will stay updated and know everything
21 that's happening with any victim that has information about
22 any other people that worked with Epstein, that committed
23 any crimes with Epstein, absolutely.

24 Senator Durbin. Well, if you're truly committed to
25 extraordinary transparency and you're willing to meet with

1 these victims, I hope you will do it immediately or we're
2 going to hold you to it.

3 I want to ask you about the immunity provisions that
4 you assigned relative to the responsibility and liability
5 of the President and his family and their businesses when
6 it comes to tax audits. Would you like to explain how we
7 can give to the President and his family and businesses
8 exemptions from complying with the tax laws of the United
9 States?

10 Mr. Blanche. It's not an exemption to comply with the
11 tax laws of the United States. As part of the settlement,
12 it was an agreement that any past audits would end.

13 Senator Durbin. "The United States" -- your
14 signature -- "The United States releases, waives, acquits,
15 and forever discharges each of the plaintiffs when it comes
16 to tax liability." That's how it reads. It's pretty
17 sweeping. You don't believe that is a discharge forever
18 from liability?

19 Mr. Blanche. Of past. Of any past filings, yes.

20 Senator Durbin. All right, it is. How do you explain
21 that to the American people, everyone in this room, all of
22 us on this side? We have to follow the tax laws of the
23 United States, and if we don't, we can be held responsible
24 for it, to the point of even criminal prosecution. Why did
25 you decide that President Trump and his family and their

1 businesses should be exempt from that same responsibility?

2 Mr. Blanche. As part of the settlement between the
3 IRS and President Trump and some of his family, two of his
4 sons and his organization, as is typical when there's a
5 settlement between plaintiffs and the IRS, part of the
6 settlement included release of any past audits. It does
7 not give any protection to the President, his family, or
8 his organizations for any taxes they file. If they filed
9 it the day of that I signed that agreement or the day
10 after, they have no protection.

11 Senator Durbin. No matter what their liability, no
12 matter what their violation of tax law, you signed a
13 document that forever discharged them from any legal
14 responsibility.

15 Mr. Blanche. As part of the settlement that we
16 entered into, any past audits were ended.

17 Senator Durbin. How often do you think that's been
18 done in the history of the United States?

19 Mr. Blanche. Involving the President of the United
20 States, I'm not sure it's ever been done, but this type of
21 settlement is done regularly.

22 Senator Durbin. So, you're saying that when it comes
23 to the President of the United States, his family and
24 businesses have no responsibility under the tax laws for
25 any wrongdoing prior to the signing of this document?

1 Mr. Blanche. No, I didn't say that at all. What I'm
2 saying is that I think President Trump and his family are
3 the first President that had their tax returns illegally
4 taken illegally and made available to the public. So, that
5 is unique to President Trump, yes, but this type of
6 settlement is not unique to the Department of Justice or
7 the IRS.

8 Senator Durbin. It's hard to explain to the American
9 people that no one is above the law when that type of
10 document was signed by you forever discharging that family
11 and that President from any liability for violating the tax
12 laws.

13 Mr. Blanche. Nobody is above the law, and when we
14 enter into settlements like that, we do it with all kinds
15 of people. It's not just President Trump. It doesn't make
16 any of those individuals above the law.

17 Senator Durbin. So, let me ask you since you don't
18 believe anyone should be above the law, about the January 6
19 rioters pardoned. We've taken a look at some of the people
20 that the President pardoned on his first day in office, the
21 ones who attacked this Capitol, and I'll use the word
22 "attack" because I was here, and I saw what happened.
23 Anyone looking at the videos knows what happened on that
24 day. Among those who were pardoned by the President are
25 individuals who've gone on to commit serious crimes against

1 innocent victims across the United States. Do you think
2 that blanket pardon by the President of January 6 rioters
3 was the right thing to do?

4 Mr. Blanche. The Constitution gives the President the
5 full power to pardon anybody for any reason he wants, and
6 so I don't question President Trump's authority or his
7 decision to do so on January 20.

8 Senator Durbin. You don't question his decision?

9 Mr. Blanche. As I said, President Trump, under our
10 Constitution, just like President Biden, has the authority
11 to pardon anybody for any Federal crime. That's a
12 privilege every President's afforded, including President
13 Biden and President Trump.

14 Senator Durbin. Well, I can tell you he may have had
15 the authority to do it, but I think someone should have
16 grabbed him by the arm and said, stop, you can't release
17 all of those rioters. Some of them actually physically
18 assaulted policemen in the Capitol. Some of them were
19 guilty of serious crimes before that day. And for the
20 President to give a blanket pardon to these individuals is
21 something that I don't think you can explain to the
22 American people. You certainly can't explain it to the
23 policemen who almost lost their lives because of these
24 attackers. I yield Mr. Chairman.

25 Chairman Grassley. Before I go to Senator Cornyn, I'd

1 like to enter in the record supporting Mr. Blanche
2 nomination from former Attorney General John Ashcroft, and
3 this is a quote from the letter. "This rule of law is the
4 best friend of liberty. To safeguard this core value,
5 America needs an Attorney General exclusively devoted to
6 the rule of law and will honor his oath to the
7 Constitution. Todd Blanche is the right person for that
8 responsibility. His record and credentials undergird my
9 wholehearted support for his nomination."

10 Without objection, that'll be entered into the record.

11 [The letter appears in the appendix:]

12 / COMMITTEE INSERT

13 Chairman Grassley. Senator Cornyn.

14 Senator Cornyn. Good morning, Mr. Blanche.

15 Congratulations on your nomination. There's a lot to
16 admire about your record or service to our country, and I
17 respect the fact that you want to continue that service as
18 the Attorney General. As I told you in my office, I think
19 the Attorney General has the hardest job in Washington,
20 D.C. because you are at the same time a member of the
21 President's Cabinet, subject to dismissal, of whatever the
22 President wants for any reason or no reason at all, but
23 then you also have a duty as the chief law enforcement
24 officer of the United States, and I think it's a very, very
25 difficult balance. And I want to ask you a little bit

1 about that, particularly in connection with the settlement
2 of the tax case.

3 There's so much that's unusual about this. First of
4 all, the fact that the tax returns were leaked by a IRS
5 contractor, Charles Littlejohn, who was appropriately
6 convicted of a crime for doing that. President Trump and
7 his family were definitely victims of a crime there, but it
8 happened back in 2020, and the lawsuit wasn't brought until
9 2026. So, with the 2-year statute of limitations, it seems
10 to me that that was something I know that was a subject of
11 pleading in the complaint and attempt to avoid the two-year
12 statute of limitations, but that struck me as unusual. But
13 let's talk a little bit about the settlement agreement and
14 the release.

15 First of all, I believe you have said that the
16 weaponization fund is a moot issue. Is that your position?

17 Mr. Blanche. Yes, it is a moot issue, meaning there
18 is no weaponization fund. The weaponization fund is dead.
19 It's not moving forward.

20 Senator Cornyn. Well, I would refer you to the
21 settlement agreement. Do you happen to have a copy of that
22 in front of you?

23 Mr. Blanche. I do not, Senator.

24 Senator Cornyn. Okay. Well, you probably know what's
25 in it.

1 Mr. Blanche. I'm familiar with it, yes.

2 Senator Cornyn. I'm sure you are. On page 4, "This
3 settlement agreement may be modified only upon the written
4 agreement of the parties." Has there been a written
5 agreement of the parties to modify the settlement fund?

6 Mr. Blanche. No, the settlement fund's just not
7 moving forward. There's no modification. It never
8 started. No money went from the Treasury to any other
9 account. There's no commissioners. It's not moving
10 forward.

11 Senator Cornyn. Well, so the settlement agreement
12 remains as it was originally, but I hear what you're
13 saying. Is the settlement agreement enforceable as a
14 contract by the parties?

15 Mr. Blanche. Well, yes, it's an enforceable document.
16 So, I suppose if President Trump's counsel sought to
17 enforce it, they potentially could, but --

18 Senator Cornyn. Including the weaponization fund.

19 Mr. Blanche. Well, they could try to enforce the
20 contract. They can't force the Department of Justice to
21 move forward with the weaponization fund. They could
22 potentially say that, I suppose, that we breached by not
23 moving forward. They haven't done that, and I'm not aware
24 that they're planning on doing that. Like I said, Senator,
25 and Senator Durbin talked about this, but I've talked

1 extensively with you and other colleagues about potentially
2 codifying so there's no weaponization fund, which is
3 certainly something that could be done. And I wasn't
4 meaning to insult this body, but just in response to
5 questions from senators about whether that could be done,
6 we very much are okay with that.

7 Senator Cornyn. But just to be clear, the President
8 of the United States, who is a plaintiff in this lawsuit,
9 has not agreed in writing to delete the weaponization fund.
10 And there's no guarantee that he or one of the other
11 plaintiffs might raise that issue by way of a breach of
12 contract lawsuit in the future.

13 Mr. Blanche. Well, Senator, the plaintiffs have no
14 power over the fund. The fund was administered solely by
15 the five commissioners and through the Department of
16 Justice, so, no, they don't have any power with respect to
17 the fund at all. I suppose they could bring a lawsuit and
18 then we would litigate it, but even if we were litigating
19 it, there's no fund, so the results of such litigation,
20 whatever it would be, wouldn't be revival of the fund.

21 [Chart]

22 Senator Cornyn. I want to ask you about the release,
23 and I know I'm guilty of what a lot of lawyers are guilty
24 of and having a chart you can't read, but I know you're
25 familiar with this document, which is the release that you

1 signed on May 19, 2026. First of all, does this purport to
2 release parties or people who were not parties to the
3 lawsuit?

4 Mr. Blanche. No, Senator.

5 Senator Cornyn. Well, it says here that "Claims
6 asserted by defendants or any of the plaintiffs or related
7 or affiliated individuals, including without limitation,
8 family or others filing jointly or parties including trust,
9 parent, sister, or related companies, affiliates, or
10 subsidiaries." They weren't a party to the lawsuit, were
11 they?

12 Mr. Blanche. I didn't hear everything you just said,
13 Senator, but the only parties that had any release as
14 respect to any potential audits, even if they existed, were
15 the plaintiffs in the lawsuit.

16 Senator Cornyn. Did you talk to the President about
17 the settlement? He originally sued for \$10 billion and
18 settled for an apology in this weaponization fund and then
19 the release of future liability for tax audits. Did you
20 discuss it with him?

21 Mr. Blanche. No, I did not. He had outside counsel.
22 I did not discuss it with his outside counsel either. It
23 was done by other people in the office.

24 Senator Cornyn. And this was a lawsuit brought --

25 Mr. Blanche. Can I qualify that?

1 Senator Cornyn. Sure.

2 Mr. Blanche. When we determined not to move forward,
3 as the President has said, that's the only time that he and
4 I had any conversations about this at all, was after when
5 it was dead, when we said we're not moving forward.

6 Senator Cornyn. And this lawsuit was brought against
7 the IRS and Treasury, yet this release purports to apply to
8 defendants or other agencies or departments. So, does this
9 release apply to, let's say, an investigation by the
10 Security and Exchange Commission or some other Federal
11 Agency?

12 Mr. Blanche. No. That's the standard language that
13 we use when we enter into settlements between plaintiffs
14 and the IRS, but, no, it doesn't bind. It's issued by me
15 because statutes require and authorize me to do that as
16 opposed to other Cabinet members, and in this case, it
17 binds only the IRS and, by extension, the Treasury.

18 Senator Cornyn. Well, I hear what you're saying, but
19 I certainly don't read that in the agreement, but let me
20 turn since I only have a few minutes left. Senator
21 Grassley raised the issue of the mifepristone lawsuit, and
22 just to be clear, you understand the difference between the
23 morning after pill and mifepristone, don't you?

24 Mr. Blanche. Yes.

25 Senator Cornyn. And so, mifepristone is a chemical

1 abortion that can be administered up to 10 weeks of
2 gestation. The length of gestation should be, according to
3 the medical literature, confirmed by ultrasound or clinical
4 assessment by a healthcare provider, and it's generally
5 safe and effective, according to the literature, when used
6 under medical guidance. But the problem is that President
7 Biden's Administration changed the Trump policy and allowed
8 the administration of this chemical abortion drug without
9 any medical guidance whatsoever.

10 And as you know, I've written a letter. Senator
11 Tillis and I sent a letter yesterday. I understand you
12 can't necessarily talk too much about your litigation
13 strategy in the case of Louisiana against FDA, but I would
14 appreciate it if you would respond to this letter for the
15 record about the intentions of the Administration. If
16 President Trump is the most pro-life President, this ought
17 to be a pretty easy call because women are hurt as a result
18 of side effects, heavy bleeding, prolonged potentially
19 infection or sepsis, incomplete abortion, other
20 complications when this is being sold through the mail or
21 through online prescription. Will you do that for me?

22 Mr. Blanche. Yes, Senator, I will.

23 [Poster]

24 Senator Cornyn. Finally, let me just, in the 50
25 seconds I have, go back to this release. This purports to

1 release lawfare and/or weaponization. Those aren't legal
2 terms of art, are they?

3 Mr. Blanche. I think they are just legal terms of
4 art. There's not any --

5 Senator Cornyn. Have they been defined in any case or
6 any statute?

7 Mr. Blanche. Not that I'm aware of, no.

8 Senator Cornyn. So, they're not a legal term of art?

9 Mr. Blanche. Well, I think that the terms have been
10 used by the legal community and by people within
11 government, but, no, I'm not sure that they're in Black's
12 Law Dictionary, for example.

13 Senator Cornyn. So, we don't know what that covers.

14 Mr. Blanche. Well, I think it depends on the
15 circumstances of the facts presented as to whether it
16 covers. As to what it covers, sorry.

17 Senator Cornyn. Thank you. My time's up.

18 Senator Grassley. Senator Klobuchar.

19 Senator Klobuchar. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

20 Mr. Blanche, after both the assassination of Melissa
21 Hortman, our former Speaker of the House, and after the
22 Enunciation School shooting in which 20 people were gunned
23 down through stained glass windows, Federal law
24 enforcement, as you and I discussed in my office a few
25 weeks ago, worked cooperatively with State and local. And

1 we also know that they've worked together on the important
2 work going on in the U.S. Attorney's Office in Minnesota
3 with regard to fraud and the ongoing fraud investigation.
4 And I know we have your commitment to continue giving
5 resources for that investigation. Is that correct?

6 Mr. Blanche. Yes, absolutely. Yes.

7 Senator Klobuchar. Thank you. So, we also discussed
8 my concern about the lack of cooperation we saw after the
9 horrific killings of Renee Good and Alex Pretti with the
10 Federal Government refusing to cooperate with State law
11 enforcement for months, blocking Minnesota investigators
12 from accessing the scene of Alex's death, even though they
13 had a judicial warrant. They also, according to news
14 reports, failed to secure and process the scene, failed to
15 process Renee Good's car for evidence. When we met a few
16 weeks ago at length, I asked you to ensure full
17 cooperation, and I appreciated that the Department shared
18 evidence with State investigators early this week.

19 Will you commit to continued information sharing
20 between Federal and State investigators in these cases as
21 well as with regard to the recent shootings in Texas and
22 Maine?

23 Mr. Blanche. I expect that these investigations
24 should be run as every investigation of similar kind. And
25 so, that necessarily includes working with State and locals

1 in the appropriate way. I think that the definition of
2 full cooperation can be disputed, but I very much expect
3 that whether it's the inspector general, or the U.S.
4 Attorney's Office, or the FBI, or who's ever on the Federal
5 side of the investigation, where appropriate, to work with
6 State and locals. I think a lot of the news reporting that
7 you referenced is actually not accurate with what has been
8 happening since the unfortunate events several months ago.

9 Senator Klobuchar. Okay. But that aside, we've seen
10 these recent shootings in Maine and the reaction of the
11 communities, understandably concerned, as well as Texas,
12 and I think that people are going to want accountability in
13 these cases. And one of the things that doesn't get as
14 much attention is the non-death cases: the Hmong elder
15 pulled out of his house in Minnesota in his underwear and
16 Crocs in 10-below-zero weather. And as the Nation's chief
17 law enforcement official, do you agree that it is
18 unacceptable for Federal agents to forcibly enter someone's
19 home without a warrant and drag them onto the street
20 without even checking that they have the right person?

21 Mr. Blanche. Well, it depends on the circumstances,
22 as you know. I mean, yes, obviously law enforcement agents
23 need a warrant to enter a house, except for limited
24 exceptions to that, so, yes, we very much believe in the
25 constitutional protections afforded American citizens. The

1 same protections are not afforded people who are here
2 illegally, so it's not a black-and-white answer where I can
3 say yes or no, but yes, I very much expect the law to be
4 followed by our law enforcement agents.

5 Senator Klobuchar. So, since the Civil War, along
6 those lines, Federal law has made it clear that the
7 President does not have the authority to deploy armed
8 Federal officials to election sites. Will you commit to
9 following clear Federal law and not deploying Federal
10 agents to polling locations?

11 Mr. Blanche. I will commit to following the law,
12 Senator, of course. Yes.

13 Senator Klobuchar. Does that include not deploying
14 Federal agents to polling places?

15 Mr. Blanche. I will absolutely follow the law no
16 matter what it includes, so, yes.

17 Senator Klobuchar. Do you understand why voters, U.S.
18 citizens, are concerned about armed agents at polling
19 places?

20 Mr. Blanche. I'm not aware of armed agents being at
21 polling places.

22 Senator Klobuchar. Thank you.

23 Mr. Blanche. So, I'm not aware of that concern, but I
24 will tell you we will follow the law, Senator.

25 Senator Klobuchar. All right. The DOJ has carried

1 out a campaign to push States to turn over voters'
2 sensitive and private data to the Administration. Thirty
3 States, including Republican-led, States like Georgia and
4 West Virginia, have refused. In doing so, the West
5 Virginian Republican Secretary of State said, "I will not
6 break the law, give up our State's rights, or compromise
7 the privacy of our citizens." Fifteen Federal courts in
8 decisions from Democratic- and Republican-appointed judges
9 have all found that these actions to force the States to
10 turn over this data is unlawful.

11 Could you discuss how cutting off antiterrorism
12 funding to States that refuse something that 15 Federal
13 courts have found to be illegal enhances our national
14 security?

15 Mr. Blanche. So, those cases are still being
16 litigated, so I can't talk specifically about the cases
17 that you mentioned, but overall, what I will say, Senator,
18 is that election integrity is extraordinarily important to
19 this Administration. It's important to this body. And so,
20 to the extent that the work that we're doing is to make
21 sure that we have fair and honest elections, that the only
22 people voting are the people who are eligible to vote and
23 that they're only voting once, that's important.

24 Senator Klobuchar. If secure elections are important,
25 how does stopping the longstanding practice of critical

1 information sharing and scenario planning between the DOJ,
2 other Federal agencies, and State and local election
3 officials promote election security --

4 Mr. Blanche. We're not doing that.

5 Senator Klobuchar. -- because we have heard from our
6 own Secretary of State that -- Steve Simon -- that these
7 standard briefings trainings have not happened.

8 Mr. Blanche. We're not doing that, so, I'm not sure
9 what you're referring to --

10 Senator Klobuchar. Okay. I'll --

11 Mr. Blanche. -- but I'm happy to follow up with your
12 office about that.

13 Senator Klobuchar. Thank you. Appreciate that.
14 Appreciate that. So, you and I talked about some of the
15 antitrust concerns I have, the independence of the
16 Department. I was very concerned by the Department's weak
17 settlement of the monopolization suit against Live Nation-
18 Ticketmaster. Do you believe that this settlement was good
19 for consumers? There was another case, of course, that the
20 State Attorney Generals brought that is going to result in
21 much better protections for consumers. Why didn't the DOJ
22 join them, stay in that suit?

23 Mr. Blanche. I share your concerns, and, yes, I do
24 believe that settlement was good for consumers. The
25 American people got a lot out of that settlement with Live

1 Nation, and you talk about another case that's separate.
2 That's ongoing litigation that could potentially take years
3 to resolve. And so, when we make a decision as a
4 Department to settle a case, we are only thinking about the
5 American consumer and making sure that we're complying not
6 only with the laws, but with what's right for America.

7 Senator Klobuchar. Did the White House have any
8 involvement in that decision?

9 Mr. Blanche. In the decision regarding which case?

10 Senator Klobuchar. To settle the Ticketmaster case.

11 Mr. Blanche. We work at times closely with White
12 House counsel on certain issues. I wasn't directly part of
13 discussions, so I can't speak to that, but I'm mostly
14 saying they were not part of it.

15 Senator Klobuchar. Okay. Are you concerned that
16 former Republican Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney
17 General Roger Alford, who has appeared before this
18 Committee as a Republican witness in the past, has said
19 that in your Department, antitrust cases are being resolved
20 based on political connections, not the legal merits?

21 Mr. Blanche. No, his words don't concern me because
22 they're not true.

23 Senator Klobuchar. Well, a lot of us disagree on that
24 front. So, I want to turn to some sort of number of issues
25 involving security. So, in the wake of the shooting last

1 year, Annunciation Catholic School was approved to receive
2 funding through the Office for Victims of Crime for mental
3 health and other support services. And I appreciate that
4 the Department has worked closely with the Annunciation
5 community on this issue, but the delays in the release of
6 these funds are creating budget concerns. Could you commit
7 to work with me on getting those funds to the school?

8 Mr. Blanche. Yes, absolutely.

9 Senator Klobuchar. Thank you. The President's most
10 recent budget reduces COPS Office funding by nearly \$500
11 million, eliminates the STOP School Violence Program that I
12 championed with Senator Hatch. He was the lead on it. Are
13 you concerned that cutting this funding will impact school
14 safety?

15 Mr. Blanche. No. I understand the question. I fully
16 expect that the grants that ultimately are included in the
17 budget that's passed will make sure that we're providing
18 appropriate funds to our communities so that they can
19 continue their good work.

20 Senator Klobuchar. I have concerns about, and I've
21 heard this from several law enforcement and domestic
22 violence groups, about the DOJ plan to consolidate the COPS
23 program, HIDTA program, Office of Violence Against Women.
24 And why do you think this will be helpful because we
25 believe that they have very different functions?

1 Mr. Blanche. I agree with you. That's not what we're
2 doing. There will still be three separate functions. What
3 we're doing is consolidating above them to one group so
4 that the application process is smoother and easier for
5 grantees to do their work. And also, so that internally,
6 some of the bureaucracy that was involved in having three
7 separate bureaucratic streams doing the same work, even
8 though you're right, the underlying programs serve
9 different functions was not efficient. So, we're making
10 that efficient.

11 Senator Klobuchar. And I'll follow up with you with
12 some of the domestic violence grants and also just want to
13 mention the continued enforcement under the Take It Down
14 Act that Senator Cruz and I passed and how important that
15 is going forward.

16 Mr. Blanche. Thank you, Senator. Yes.

17 Chairman Grassley. Before I go to Senator Kennedy,
18 I'd like to read a letter supporting the nominee from the
19 National Association of Police Organizations. More than
20 1,000 police organizations and 250,000 law enforcement
21 officers nationwide are represented by this letter. "Mr.
22 Blanche has proven his commitment to the rule of law and a
23 fair and impartial justice system. As Deputy Attorney
24 General and later Acting Attorney General, he has built a
25 strong partnership with the law enforcement community, from

1 supporting the Department of Justice Law Enforcement
2 Assistance Grant Program to working to ensure
3 accountability within the public safety officer's benefits
4 program, he has consistently endeavored to meet the needs
5 of State and local law enforcement officers and their
6 families."

7 Without objection, this will be entered in.

8 [The letter appears in the appendix:]

9 / COMMITTEE INSERT

10 Senator Grassley. Senator Kennedy.

11 **BEGINNING OF TRACK 2**

12 Senator Kennedy. General, I assume that you consider
13 yourself to be qualified to be the permanent Attorney
14 General. Is that right?

15 Mr. Blanche. Yes, Senator.

16 Senator Kennedy. I've read your resume. We all have.
17 You don't need to comment on this, but it just seems to me
18 that no fair-minded person could conclude that you're not
19 qualified. You spent a long time with the Department. You
20 spent a long time in private practice. So, the opposition
21 of my Democratic friends must be based on something else.
22 Are you and President Trump friends?

23 Mr. Blanche. I'm his lawyer, was his lawyer, and now
24 I'm the Deputy Attorney General. So, I met him as his
25 criminal defense attorney. I'm not sure there's very many

1 people who have ever had a criminal defense attorney who
2 calls that person their friend. I now have a --

3 Senator Kennedy. Well, let me put it this way. Are
4 you enemies?

5 Mr. Blanche. No, we're not enemies at all.

6 Senator Kennedy. Okay.

7 Mr. Blanche. No.

8 Senator Kennedy. Have you ever seen a President of
9 the United States appoint an enemy to be Attorney General?

10 Mr. Blanche. I have not.

11 Senator Kennedy. Usually they appoint their qualified
12 friends, don't they?

13 Mr. Blanche. Yes.

14 Senator Kennedy. I mean, one President appointed his
15 brother, right?

16 Mr. Blanche. He did, Senator.

17 Senator Kennedy. And I can think of another President
18 who appointed his former law partner. Is that right?

19 Mr. Blanche. It is correct.

20 Senator Kennedy. Okay. Are you responsible for all
21 the President's decisions?

22 Mr. Blanche. No, Senator, I'm not.

23 Senator Kennedy. I mean, does the President get up in
24 the morning and give you a call first thing and say, "Todd,
25 tell me what I ought to do today?"

1 Mr. Blanche. He does not.

2 Senator Kennedy. Does he ever ask your opinion on

3 actions he should take?

4 Mr. Blanche. Yes.

5 Senator Kennedy. Do you tell him the truth?

6 Mr. Blanche. Every time.

7 Senator Kennedy. Have you ever disagreed with him?

8 Mr. Blanche. Yes.

9 Senator Kennedy. And have you ever disagreed with him

10 and he did it anyway?

11 Mr. Blanche. Yes.

12 Senator Kennedy. And did you go call a press

13 conference and announce that the President made a bad

14 decision?

15 Mr. Blanche. Absolutely not.

16 Senator Kennedy. That's not what Attorneys General

17 do, correct, is it?

18 Mr. Blanche. Correct.

19 Senator Kennedy. Okay. Has he ever asked you to do

20 anything illegal?

21 Mr. Blanche. No.

22 Senator Kennedy. Would you do it if he asked you?

23 Mr. Blanche. Absolutely not.

24 Senator Kennedy. Hmm. How many pages of the so-

25 called Epstein files has the Department released?

1 Mr. Blanche. Nearly 3 million.

2 Senator Kennedy. How many more pages are there?

3 Mr. Blanche. That are responsive? We're not aware of
4 any.

5 Senator Kennedy. How about that, in the Department's
6 opinion, are not responsive?

7 Mr. Blanche. Well, from what we collected, about 3
8 million that were just nothing to do with Jeffrey Epstein
9 or the case at all.

10 Senator Kennedy. Okay. Why don't you just release
11 everything, just let it rip?

12 Mr. Blanche. Well, that would be against the law
13 because the only reason we could release the 3 million we
14 did is because of the Epstein Transparency Act. There are
15 Federal laws that prohibit the release of case files, and
16 the Epstein Transparency Act was very explicit and specific
17 about what could be and should be released.

18 Senator Kennedy. Well, first, we can agree, can we
19 not, that Mr. Epstein was a pig?

20 Mr. Blanche. Yes.

21 Senator Kennedy. Other than to himself, who, if
22 anyone else, did Mr. Epstein traffic young women to?

23 Mr. Blanche. From what we learned, from what we know,
24 so when we know, I mean, what's in the FBI files and what's
25 in the DOJ files, we did not identify evidence. And by

1 "we," I mean career prosecutors, not me, not my leadership,
2 but career prosecutors in New York and career prosecutors
3 in Florida who worked this case hard, did identify other
4 participants, some of whom, as has been discussed, were
5 also victims themselves of Mr. Epstein. But we did not
6 have evidence, as of now, of other men that Epstein helped
7 traffic.

8 That does not mean it didn't happen, and I want to be
9 clear about that. It just means that we have evidence that
10 the FBI gathered and that the Department of Justice
11 gathered and that's the body of work that we have to work
12 with, which is why I said earlier, if there's anybody out
13 there, victim or otherwise, that has information, I beg
14 them to come forward.

15 Senator Kennedy. Okay. Did Jack Smith read my
16 emails?

17 Mr. Blanche. I'm not sure, Senator. I don't know.

18 Senator Kennedy. Would you check for me?

19 Mr. Blanche. We will check Senator, yes.

20 Senator Kennedy. I think he read Senator Grassley's
21 emails. How can someone at the Department of Justice get
22 Senator Grassley's emails without probable cause?

23 Mr. Blanche. There are checks in place that should
24 make it extraordinarily difficult for a prosecutor to
25 collect and review a senator's emails, or a congressman's

1 emails, or a lawyer's emails, or other folks that have
2 privileged protections associated with their
3 communications, and those checks and balances should always
4 be used.

5 Senator Kennedy. But Mr. Smith just ignored them?

6 Mr. Blanche. I cannot speak for Mr. Smith, Senator.

7 Senator Kennedy. Would you check for me, first, if he
8 read my emails --

9 Mr. Blanche. We will check.

10 Senator Kennedy. -- and number two, how he got them.
11 And number three, I don't mean to single out my friend,
12 Senator Grassley, but what emails did he get of Senator
13 Grassley, and, I mean, what were they limited to, if at
14 all? You know, did he get emails of Senator Grassley
15 talking about his corn harvest and all that, and who did he
16 share them with? Do you know if Mr. Smith shared my emails
17 with Attorney General Garland?

18 Mr. Blanche. I do not know.

19 Senator Kennedy. Can you check for me?

20 Mr. Blanche. We are investigating that Senator, yes.

21 Senator Kennedy. Yeah. I'd kind of like to know all
22 that. Now, Mayor Lori Lightfoot sent us, she sent the
23 world a letter suggesting that we should not confirm you as
24 Attorney General. Who is Mayor Lori Lightfoot, just for
25 the record?

1 Mr. Blanche. So, she's the former Mayor of Chicago.
2 I believe she had a brief stint in the Department of
3 Justice prior to her political life.

4 Senator Kennedy. Right, and you had some conflicts
5 with her.

6 Mr. Blanche. I do not believe she supports our
7 Administration's efforts making America safe again.

8 Senator Kennedy. Okay. Right. She thinks cops are a
9 bigger problem than criminals. Would that be a fair
10 assessment?

11 Mr. Blanche. Her public rhetoric is not something
12 that either myself or this Administration supports, which
13 is to always back our law enforcement.

14 Senator Kennedy. She thinks if a cop shoots a
15 criminal, it's automatically the cop's fault, but if a
16 criminal shoots a cop, it's automatically the gun's fault.
17 Would that be a fair assessment of the mayor's position?

18 Mr. Blanche. Her public statements suggest that.

19 Senator Kennedy. Okay. Would you put her even in
20 charge of a ham sandwich?

21 Mr. Blanche. I don't believe she should be any part
22 of this Administration.

23 Senator Kennedy. Well, the people in Chicago
24 apparently agreed. I think she ran for reelection and got
25 16 percent of the vote. Is that right? Do you recall?

1 Mr. Blanche. I'm not sure what percentage she got,
2 Senator.

3 Senator Kennedy. Okay. One of the things that under
4 your authority, the Department has concentrated on, which I
5 agree with, in addition to prosecuting crime, is the
6 prosecution of white collar crime, fraud. Tell me a little
7 bit about that.

8 Mr. Blanche. It's incredible since COVID, the
9 absolute thievery that's happened from the fisc by people
10 in this country. And so, we have focused tremendous amount
11 of efforts, not only in the new division, but at every U.S.
12 attorney's office, with every inspector general and their
13 offices, the FBI, DHS, and HSI to just root out this fraud.
14 You have examples of individuals just stealing, so setting
15 up entire centers for autism when there are no patients,
16 when there is no center, and taking millions of dollars of
17 hard-earned taxpayers' money. And so, we are very focused
18 on that. Like I said earlier, billions and billions we've
19 already collected in just the past couple of months. That
20 effort is going to go forward for as long as I am in the
21 position that I'm in now, no matter whether I'm confirmed
22 or not.

23 And it's extraordinarily important to every American
24 that this doesn't happen because we're not talking about
25 whether someone agrees or disagrees with a policy. It's

1 just outright theft by individuals, and unfortunately many
2 State governments, if they didn't absolutely know what was
3 happening and just encourage it, they certainly stood idly
4 by while it was happening, which is also a problem.

5 Senator Kennedy. Don't forget to check on my emails
6 for me.

7 Mr. Blanche. Senator, yes.

8 Senator Kennedy. Thank you.

9 Chairman Grassley. Senator Whitehouse.

10 Senator Whitehouse. Good Morning, Mr. Blanche.

11 Mr. Blanche. Good morning.

12 Senator Whitehouse. Why won't you tell us what became
13 of the \$50,000 in confidential money that the FBI reported
14 that it gave to Tom Homan?

15 Mr. Blanche. I'm not aware of what you're speaking
16 about. To the extent that there have been public reporting
17 about an investigation, I know nothing about it.

18 Senator Whitehouse. Well, the public reporting is
19 that the FBI reported giving \$50,000 in the nature of a
20 bribe to Tom Homan, and there's been no report of what
21 became of that \$50,000. Will you answer that question?
22 Not now, but will you answer that question because we've
23 been asking it for a long time now. Your Department
24 certainly knows what's happening.

25 Mr. Blanche. I'm not aware that that's true.

1 Senator Whitehouse. Well, take a look at it, and it's
2 publicly reported, and the FBI reported it, and you should
3 answer the question. That's not the only one. Here's a
4 list of unanswered questions that I have just asked. I
5 don't know how it is that the Chairman thinks that you've
6 cooperated with the Committee or that you've been
7 transparent with the Committee. That is not my experience.
8 You said earlier that you welcome our questions. Great.
9 Answer our questions. That's the real point. Where we've
10 failed to get answers to our oversight questions, we've
11 actually had to revert to the Freedom of Information Act,
12 the general law of government transparency, to try to get
13 answers from the Department of Justice. Here's how we did.
14 Not well.

15 We have this stack of questions that you haven't
16 answered in the nature of oversight. We have this stack of
17 FOIA requests that you haven't answered. And I think it's
18 important for us to believe that you actually take
19 seriously your constitutional oversight responsibilities in
20 order to confirm you, that you actually take seriously your
21 obligations to this Committee irrespective of party,
22 majority or minority, in order to confirm you. So, I will
23 ask before we get to a vote on this that you take a look at
24 these and get us answers. Where we have had answers, Mr.
25 Blanche, they have not been informative. They have been

1 blow-offs.

2 So, let's move on to Trump v. IRS. Our research
3 indicates that senior DOJ officials have never in the
4 history of the Department before faced a judicial inquiry
5 into a fraud on the Court participated in by the Department
6 of Justice. That was the inquiry opened in Florida. The
7 question about fraud on the Court committed by the
8 Department of Justice remains open in the judge's decision.

9 Here's what she did find. She found that the
10 Department of Justice colluded with the Trump plaintiffs,
11 that the Department of Justice violated DOJ policies in
12 that collusion, that Department attorneys were derelict in
13 their responsibilities as DOJ attorneys, that the
14 Department failed to zealously advocate on behalf of the
15 United States of America, its true client. And as I said,
16 the fraud on the Court question remains open, an
17 unprecedented allegation about the Department. As a result
18 of that, the order was transmitted to the New York State
19 Bar for potential disciplinary proceedings.

20 I would like to ask in addition, since this is new
21 news, the decision was what, 2 days ago? I would like to
22 ask that you say to us that you will be willing to provide
23 all of the documents and communications between the
24 Department of Justice and the Trump plaintiffs in that
25 matter.

1 Mr. Blanche. I'm not aware of any communications. I
2 didn't have any, so if you put a request in, we'll look at
3 it. I mean, obviously that's active continued litigation
4 in the Southern District of Florida, so it depends on --

5 Senator Whitehouse. Explain how it is active
6 continued litigation in the District of Florida.

7 Mr. Blanche. Well, there's been several indications
8 that the parties did I never entered notice of appearance --
9 but that the parties intend to appeal the judge's Monday
10 56-page decision.

11 Senator Whitehouse. Well, it'll be interesting. Do
12 you intend to appeal, the Department of Justice?

13 Mr. Blanche. We weren't really even part of that
14 decision. So, to the extent there's something that we
15 can't appeal, I very vigorously will encourage the
16 Department to do so.

17 Senator Whitehouse. Well, here's the tell. In that
18 case, the Department of Justice filed no answer, filed no
19 agreement with respect to the extension of time, filed no
20 response to the case or controversy. Amici filed nothing
21 related to the withdrawal of the complaint, filed no
22 settlement and filed no response to the fraud on the Court
23 inquiry. To me, as a one-time litigator, that looks like
24 really weird behavior. And when for the first time in
25 history there's inquiry into fraud upon the Court committed

1 by the Department of Justice, the silence from the
2 Department in response to that is deafening, Mr. Blanche.
3 Deafening. And it strikes me that the stratagem here was
4 to file no pleadings to try to keep the Department out of
5 the authority of the Court when what the Department knew to
6 be a collusive and false enterprise was blown up in that
7 court.

8 Now, it didn't work because the Court found collusion
9 and it takes two to collude, and they also went on and made
10 the other adverse findings about the Department's conduct.
11 And the problem here, Mr. Blanche, is that it's not just
12 that one occasion. Between judges appointed by every
13 President harshly criticizing the Department's work in your
14 tenure, grand juries rejecting indictments, judicial
15 findings of outright misconduct, capable lawyers fleeing
16 the stinking ship, this seems to be the most troubled
17 Department of Justice in history.

18 [Poster.]

19 Senator Whitehouse. Here are some of the misconduct
20 findings against your U.S. attorneys, and if I haven't put
21 it up yet, here's a word cloud of the commentary by Federal
22 judges about the conduct of your DOJ. These are red flag
23 words that when I was a U.S. attorney would have provoked,
24 at minimum, an internal conversation about what the hell
25 went wrong and very likely a conversation with OPR and

1 maybe OPR pursuit. Words like "pretext" mean a lot coming
2 from a judge about a government argument usually enjoying
3 the presumption of regularity. We need answers. I need
4 you to be able to tell me that this kind of misconduct is
5 going to stop if you're confirmed as Attorney General. Can
6 you say that?

7 Mr. Blanche. The Department of Justice works hard.
8 The prosecutors work hard every day, and I appreciate the
9 handpicked words that you have behind you right now, but
10 that's not reflective of the hundred thousand indictments
11 and informations that have been filed to do the work that I
12 talked about earlier today. And so, while cherry-picking a
13 few isolated words from district court or magistrate judges
14 in certain districts is something that you're entitled to
15 do, it's absolutely false to suggest that this Department
16 of Justice is not executing as we should and doing the
17 right thing every single day.

18 Senator Whitehouse. I will tell you that you are
19 wrong, that in the history of the Department, this kind of
20 criticism by Federal judges is unprecedented, and it comes
21 from judges of every different political persuasion.

22 Let me ask about the FBI. How long do you intend to
23 put up with that Kash Patel character? Are you good with
24 his airplane jaunts? Are you confident he's not drinking
25 on the job? Are you sure none of his travel is a pretext

1 for vacation activities like snorkeling Olympics and
2 visiting girlfriends? Are you sure he knows what he's
3 doing? Do you vouch for him? Are you willing to look at
4 whether he lied to this Committee?

5 Mr. Blanche. That's an extraordinarily obnoxious
6 question, Senator, and I have full faith in Director Patel
7 and the work that he's doing every day and the --

8 Senator Whitehouse. Great. You got to own that. One
9 last thing if I may. You have refused to exclude January 6
10 rioters from your anti-weaponization fund. You have
11 refused to put in writing that the slush fund is dead.
12 Indeed, you signal to allies that payouts are still on
13 track. You have vacated seditious conspiracy convictions
14 against members of the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers. You
15 hired January 6 rioter, Jared Wise, who had urged the mob
16 to kill police officers.

17 You scrubbed press releases about January 6
18 prosecutions and called the releases partisan propaganda.
19 You denied that Trump encouraged any violence on January 6.
20 You've cleaned house of every attorney who worked on a case
21 related to Trump, and you've bragged that bringing justice
22 for violent rioters meant that every one of them was either
23 pardoned or had their sentence commuted. I hope that our
24 colleagues who are concerned about what happened on January
25 6 take that into account. Thank you.

1 Chairman Grassley. Would you like to respond?

2 Mr. Blanche. I would. Almost everything the Senator
3 just said, and he's protected. He's allowed to lie, but
4 almost everything he just said was absolutely false, okay,
5 starting with the fact that I have never, I have never said
6 that any sort of violence against law enforcement is
7 appropriate. I have never said that publicly, I have never
8 said that in a speech, and I certainly do not believe it.
9 I did not hire the person referenced, and that is, again,
10 something that just happens not to be true.

11 When I talk about what happened with the convicted
12 January 6 defendants, I talk about what President Trump
13 did. He has the absolute right to pardon anybody for any
14 reason he sees fit, and every one of them got pardoned or
15 committed. I am not celebrating that. It is a fact. And
16 the fact that my Department had to take action in response
17 to those pardons by dismissing some cases is exactly what I
18 have to do under the law, and it's what I did. So, the
19 narrative that the Senator just suggested and put on me as
20 something I believe is absolutely not true.

21 Senator Whitehouse. Since he accused me of lying
22 personally, Mr. Chairman, let me ask that I put this series
23 of concerns into a question for the record and that you
24 under oath, one by one, tell me where there's a lie, okay?

25 Mr. Blanche. I'm happy to do that.

1 Senator Whitehouse. We'll get that to you.

2 Mr. Blanche. I'm happy to do that. Absolutely.

3 [The information appears in the appendix:]

4 / COMMITTEE INSERT

5 Chairman Grassley. Before I go to Senator Blackburn,
6 since oversight was brought up and responsiveness of your
7 Department, I'd like to speak about how it was with the
8 Biden Justice Department's non-responsiveness to my
9 oversight letters. If the Biden Justice Department would
10 have been remotely responsive, there wouldn't be such a
11 backlog right now. So, let's not pretend for a minute the
12 last Administration was a benchmark of responsiveness, and
13 this Administration, to its credit, has been more
14 responsive. I talked about in my opening statement 43,000
15 pages of documents that you have released compared to a lot
16 less in the previous Administration. Senator Blackburn.

17 Senator Blackburn. Thank you Mr. Chairman, and thank
18 you for being with us today.

19 Before I get to my questions, I would like to make you
20 aware that when Ranking Member Durbin was Chairman in the
21 last Congress, I tried repeatedly to subpoena the Epstein
22 files so that we could get those banking records and those
23 flight logs, and repeatedly, that was blocked. So, the
24 Democrats at that point didn't want to know what was in the
25 Epstein files until they lost the majority, and then they

1 were hellbent to get that.

2 I also want to make certain that we get on the record
3 that DOJ has met with the following list of attorneys who
4 represent victims, including many who have claimed that
5 they've never had a meeting with DOJ. Now here is this
6 list: Sigrid McCawley; Jordan Merson, Gloria Allred, Arick
7 Fudali, Alan Goldfarb, Daniel Kaiser, Mariann Meier Wang,
8 Glenn Nick, Adam Horowitz, Jack Scarola, Dennis Ardi, Kevin
9 Mintzer, Jill Greenfield, Julie Kays, David H. Brodie,
10 Robert Glassman, Kate L. Doniger, Andrew Villacastin,
11 Brittany Henderson, Brad Edward, Avrom Robin, Neil Binder,
12 David Fleisigg, Roberta Kaplan, Tasha Thompason, for the
13 record.

14 I do want to talk with you a little bit about Memphis
15 and the Memphis Safe Task Force. We are so grateful. When
16 you talk about a success, the work that has been done in
17 Memphis in fighting crime, this is going to be a big part
18 of President Trump's legacy in his commitment to Memphis.
19 The commitment that has been made by his Administration is
20 something that Memphians and all West Tennesseans are
21 incredibly grateful for. And this is something with
22 President Trump, with Kash Patel, we started saying please
23 help us, and that call was answered.

24 I brought the crime stats. We get the daily report
25 from Memphis. Eleven thousand forty arrests have been

1 made, and yesterday there were 40 arrests. These included
2 someone charged with second-degree murder, another with
3 first-degree murder, aggravated child abuse, attempted
4 rape, and aggravated assault. There have been nearly 2,000
5 firearms that have been seized, and there have been 155
6 children that have been recovered. The stats here tell the
7 story.

8 You, President, Director Patel and the agencies that
9 are there working with our governor, State agencies, the
10 Memphis mayor, the Memphis police chiefs, this is the way
11 to fight crime, and we are ever so grateful, and we want to
12 be able to sustain and build on that. And I'd like for you
13 to talk just a moment about Memphis and what lies ahead for
14 Memphis and, more broadly, for other cities and counties
15 that are focused on public safety.

16 Mr. Blanche. Thank you, Senator. What we have don,
17 and by "we," I don't mean the Department of Justice alone.
18 I mean State and local partners, the National Guard, all of
19 our Federal agencies, DHS in Memphis should be a poster
20 child for a lot of cities in this country. You have a city
21 that had skyrocketing crime and restaurants that were out
22 of business, storefronts that didn't exist. They were
23 boarded up, and we came together. And you're right, it was
24 President Trump working with you, working with the
25 Governor, working with our partners and said we're going to

1 fix this. Just like we did in D.C., we're going to go into
2 this city and we're going to arrest. I mean, amazingly, a
3 very small percentage of Memphis' population was committing
4 a very large percentage of the crimes. And so, if you can
5 focus on that small percentage, you're actually able to
6 bring the crime stats down remarkably, which is exactly
7 what we did.

8 As far as what happens going forward, we keep on doing
9 it. There's restaurants opening in Memphis. There's
10 stores opening in Memphis. It's a new city compared to
11 where it was one year ago, and that's something that we
12 can't let up on. But again, I look at it as a poster child
13 of what we should do in cities across this country.

14 Senator Blackburn. And we are pleased to know that
15 you all are doing a Model City Program at DOJ in order to
16 help with public safety in other areas.

17 Mr. Blanche. Yes, and that's not just for Memphis,
18 but for several cities around the country where we are
19 going to put money where our mouth is and put a lot of
20 resources into the cities to help make sure that cities
21 that need to be safer are safer, and if they're on the
22 right track, that they have the resources they need to keep
23 doing it.

24 Senator Blackburn. When you were in the office, we
25 talked about my carjacking bill that would lower the intent

1 standard to a general knowingly requirement, giving the
2 Federal prosecutors, more tools so that they could hold
3 some of these violent carjackers accountable. We thought
4 it was going to move with the NDAA, and Leader Schumer has
5 blocked that, and we're disappointed. It's a bipartisan
6 bill. But talk about the importance of lowering that
7 statute so that we can prosecute these crimes.

8 Mr. Blanche. Yes. It needs to be done because
9 they're carjacking not only in Tennessee, but in every city
10 in this country has gotten out of hand. The criminals are
11 better at it. They have tools that make it easier to get
12 into cars. They're willing to exact violence. And so, the
13 standard that exists now under the statute, but also
14 because of certain cases, make it higher than a regular
15 general intent crime. And law enforcement and prosecutors
16 will do the right thing, so we need to be empowered with
17 tools to prosecute these cases, and if there's cases where
18 somebody was in the car and didn't know, prosecutors are
19 not going to move forward. They'll do the right thing, but
20 it shouldn't be the law that puts the damper on that. And
21 so, I'm hopeful that we can continue to work together on
22 that because it is very important.

23 Senator Blackburn. There was a deeply disappointing
24 decision from the Court in the Trump v. Barbara case that
25 it's clear that Congress, we are going to have to step up

1 and do something about birthright citizenship, and this is
2 our opening. We know that birthright tourism is something
3 that is taking place in our country. We know that during
4 the first Trump Administration, there was a good bit of
5 evidence on this. I've had a ban birthright tourism bill
6 that would block these 33,000 births a year from people who
7 are circumventing our laws and coming here simply for the
8 purpose of giving birth. It's primarily the Chinese, and
9 it is also the Russian oligarchs that are exploiting this,
10 and my bill would make coming here to give birth
11 inadmissible as a way to obtain a visa and immediately
12 deportable as an offense. And touch on why Congress needs
13 to act and give the Administration more tools to enforce
14 this.

15 Mr. Blanche. Yes. So, the very day or the day after
16 the decision came out, the Department of Justice issued a
17 directive to prosecutors to focus on the conduct you're
18 describing using existing laws and tools that we have,
19 which is mostly around false statements or fraudulent
20 information in the visa application process. We're going
21 to do that. We are limited in how we can prosecute folks
22 that are coming here and lying about why they're coming
23 here, and coming here just to give birth, and also the
24 organizations that are facilitating that. Any
25 congressional statutory adjustment, the Supreme Court

1 opinions relied in part on the statutory part of this that
2 would control, would give us more tools, and would give the
3 President more tools to keep out people who are absolutely
4 not coming for the right reason, only coming to give birth.

5 Senator Blackburn. And you're doing a great job on
6 fraud and going after fraud that has been committed. The
7 Fraud Task Force seems to be working well, and from
8 Tennesseans, I hear a good bit about this. They want the
9 fraudulent activity to stop. It's taxpayer money, and they
10 want their money to be used wisely. We have had
11 legislation that would apply to individuals that have come
12 into the country either illegally or maybe they've been
13 naturalized citizens, but the Fraud Accountability Act
14 would push for that deportation and de-naturalization if
15 they have been found to be defrauding individuals or local,
16 State, or Federal Government. And I'm over time, and I'll
17 ask you for this in writing since I'm over my time, but I'd
18 like to hear from you why it is important to put more tools
19 in that toolbox for you all to go after these individuals
20 that are defrauding the U.S. taxpayer. Thank you, Mr.
21 Chairman.

22 Mr. Blanche. Thank you.

23 Chairman Grassley. Before I call on Senator Coons,
24 Senator Durbin, would like to speak for a short time.

25 Senator Durbin. Very short. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 Based on the statements just made by the Senator from
2 Tennessee, we've checked the transcript of the Committee.
3 During the November 30, 2023, Supreme Court ethics subpoena
4 authorization markup, I chaired and attempted to recognize
5 Senator Blackburn multiple times so that she could offer an
6 amendment regarding Epstein's flight logs, but her
7 Republican colleagues prevented her from doing so by
8 filibustering and then invoking the Senate rule on 2 hours
9 to end the markup. Many Epstein records, including flight
10 logs, have been public for years. My staff subsequently
11 reached out to Senator Blackburn to work to identify which
12 records she actually wanted and still believes had not been
13 made public. To this day, she's never responded.

14 Senator Blackburn. Mr. Chairman, since he mentioned
15 my name, I have previously and will continue. There is
16 video, there is a transcript, and, Mr. Blanche, I'll be
17 happy to forward that to you.

18 Chairman Grassley. Senator Coons.

19 **[35:33] - Coons**

20 Senator Coons. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking
21 Member. Acting Attorney General Blanche, thank you for
22 your service and for appearing here. Thank you to your
23 family and to the men and women of the Department of
24 Justice who worked tirelessly to fight crime and to make
25 our Nation secure. I'm grateful for their service. I'm

1 sorry that your schedule apparently didn't permit us to
2 meet before this confirmation hearing, but I hope and
3 expect we'll find time to meet soon after today.

4 Mr. Blanche. Absolutely.

5 Senator Coons. Thank you. As I consider your
6 nomination, like all other nominations to similar Cabinet
7 positions, I need to know you're qualified to serve, you
8 demonstrably are, that you have the policy views to serve
9 well -- we will discuss that today -- and most importantly
10 in this role, that you have the independence to serve as
11 the Attorney General for the American people, and that last
12 question has troubled me the most. You're in charge of a
13 Department of Justice I don't recognize prosecuting the
14 President's political enemies, firing rank-and-file
15 prosecutors and FBI agents because of the cases they were
16 assigned to, slashing grants for law enforcement and public
17 safety. These are some actions that in your previous
18 confirmation hearing before us you said you would not take.
19 Now, I appreciate your statement walking back the \$1.8
20 billion weaponization fund that you created, but I question
21 how it got that far, and we'll get into that. You sat in
22 Appropriations hearing earlier this year before me and
23 defended it at that time. In fact, if I remember
24 correctly, you told me I was wrong for criticizing it, but
25 following questions by Senators Durbin and Cornyn, I'm

1 concerned it's not dead yet, and I think we should talk
2 that through. Overall, this is not what I believe the
3 American people expect or deserve from the Department of
4 Justice.

5 Having spent critical parts of January 6 in this room
6 taking shelter from the mob, I just wanted to open with
7 some questions. How many people were convicted of
8 assaulting law enforcement officers on January 6?

9 Mr. Blanche. I believe around 120 approximately, but
10 I could be off a few more.

11 Senator Coons. You are. The answer is more than 200,
12 and how many of those individuals had their sentences
13 commuted or were pardoned by President Trump?

14 Mr. Blanche. President Trump either commuted or
15 pardoned every defendant from the January 6 events.

16 Senator Coons. That's correct. And in this room
17 right now and outside this room are Capitol police officers
18 protecting us in this hearing room. How many of them do
19 you think might have friends or colleagues who were
20 attacked by supporters of the President on January 6?

21 Mr. Blanche. I don't know the numbers, but I'm sure
22 many of the Capitol Police officers who are here today
23 either were working on January 6 or knew people who were.

24 Senator Coons. I'll just say that I consider it a
25 shameful slap in the face of the men and women of law

1 enforcement for those convicted of assaulting police
2 officers to have been pardoned. I know you were not
3 serving as Deputy Attorney General when President Trump
4 pardoned those folks, but you said just a few moments ago
5 that you were not celebrating this decision by the
6 President. He was exercising his constitutional power.
7 But earlier this year in front of CPAC, a conservative
8 event, I would say from the transcript, you actually
9 trumpeted it as an achievement saying, "If you look at what
10 happened to the men and women convicted because of January
11 6, by 5:00 p.m., on January 20, every one of them was
12 either pardoned or had their sentence commuted by President
13 Trump." So, when folks say you've done nothing, I say you
14 have a very short memory. Would you say that you are proud
15 of President Trump's decision to pardon individuals who
16 assaulted law enforcement?

17 Mr. Blanche. That not what I was saying there at all,
18 Senator. So, I was responding to inquiries around why more
19 hadn't been done by the Department of Justice with respect
20 to January 6 defendants. And so, my answer was that
21 January 6 defendants and some of their lawyers had a short
22 memory because a lot had already been done. Indeed, by the
23 end of the day on January 20, they had all been pardoned or
24 commuted, so I wasn't celebrating it. I was merely stating
25 a fact, which is that the January 6 defendants did receive

1 a very generous pardon or commutation from President Trump,
2 every one of them on January 20.

3 Senator Coons. A generous and, in my view, for those
4 who had assaulted police officers, unwarranted,
5 unjustified, a historical and a terrible precedent. Let me
6 move on to questions I've asked in previous hearings. Is
7 President Trump, just as a simple matter of constitutional
8 law, eligible to run for another term as President in 2028?

9 Mr. Blanche. I don't believe he is, no.

10 Senator Coons. That is a correct, in my view, reading
11 of the plain language of the 22nd Amendment. Why do you
12 think several of the judicial nominees of this
13 Administration have refused repeatedly to answer that
14 question simply and clearly as you just did when I put it
15 to them?

16 Mr. Blanche. I have no idea why they answered
17 questions with me.

18 Senator Coons. Me neither.

19 Mr. Blanche. You're asking me to speculate about
20 something. I don't know.

21 Senator Coons. Is the Department of Justice that you
22 are running independent from the White House?

23 Mr. Blanche. The Department of Justice, like every
24 single Department in the executive, is part of the
25 executive. I mean, Article II of the Constitution gives

1 the power of the executive to President Trump, so we
2 certainly operate with integrity. We certainly operate in
3 the single mindset to serve the American people and do the
4 right thing, but if confirmed, I will be a member of the
5 Cabinet. I'm serving in the acting capacity that way now,
6 just like the Abbott Cabinet members. President Trump can
7 fire me whenever he wants.

8 Senator Coons. Do you have a sense why he fired your
9 predecessor?

10 Mr. Blanche. I have no idea. We all serve at the
11 pleasure of President Trump in this Administration.

12 Senator Coons. Did President Trump ever post on Truth
13 Social directing your predecessor to get at it to prosecute
14 his perceived political enemies?

15 Mr. Blanche. I don't think those were his exact
16 words, but he didn't --

17 Senator Coons. Those were --

18 Mr. Blanche. -- not his exact words.

19 Senator Coons. I clearly thought was the intention.
20 It is my impression, sir, that you are here rather than
21 your predecessor because the President was unhappy with her
22 failures to actually secure convictions of folks like
23 Attorney General Tish James or former FBI Director Jim
24 Comey. If you're confirmed and you're asked to take an
25 action you believe to be illegal or unethical, would you

1 resign?

2 Mr. Blanche. That will never happen, but yes, if it
3 were to happen, I'm not going to violate my oath to the
4 Constitution.

5 Senator Coons. I appreciate that answer. You did
6 answer a question by a colleague about input that you gave
7 to the President. Did you ever say no to the President on
8 the slush fund, the anti-weaponization fund? Did you
9 advise him against this?

10 Mr. Blanche. I will not talk about communications I
11 have with the President. I served as his lawyer for a
12 couple of years before he was elected. I'm the Deputy
13 Attorney General and the Acting Attorney General, so I'm
14 not going to talk about communications that I have with
15 him. But Senator, I will say that President Trump trusts
16 me to give him counsel. Counsel does not mean "yes man,"
17 and that's true in my case like it should be in any
18 Attorney's General's case.

19 Senator Coons. Let me just for a minute bear down on
20 the anti-weaponization fund. You've testified to the House
21 we are not moving forward with that fund period, but you've
22 repeatedly refused to put that commitment in writing or
23 just submit a declaration to the Court. You're an officer
24 of the Court, a member of the Bar. You should be able to
25 make that assertion in a court filing or even in a letter

1 submitted to this body.

2 On May 19, you testified before the Justice
3 Appropriation Subcommittee since the case had been
4 dismissed. There was no judge and no mechanism for
5 judicial review, but in an opinion this week, a Federal
6 judge wrote, and I'm quoting, that your testimony "was at
7 best misleading, and at worst disingenuous," explaining the
8 Court remained available to review this agreement had you
9 sought relief. Why not seek review of the settlement
10 agreement or submit some record, some writing, given that
11 the President continues to publicly champion this
12 weaponization fund and given your previous answer to me in
13 another hearing that you wouldn't say whether or not those
14 who assaulted cops on January 6 would be eligible for
15 multimillion-dollar payouts?

16 Mr. Blanche. So, there's a lot of questions there.
17 First of all, we have put it in writing. It's in repeated
18 court filings in EDVA and D.C., so this narrative that you
19 won't put it in writing happens not to be true. The reason
20 why neither myself nor Secretary Bessent agreed to put a
21 declaration in is because there's longstanding precedent
22 that judges cannot ask Cabinet secretaries or people like
23 me to put in declarations that has nothing to do with
24 whether the fund is alive. I'm under oath today, and I've
25 said it's dead repeatedly. I said it to the House

1 Oversight Committee, and I'm happy to say it as many times
2 as necessary. As far as what the judge said in Florida,
3 just the last question you asked about Florida, that judge
4 disagreed with what I said. I still believe the 11th
5 Circuit precedent, which I've studied, I am right. So,
6 we'll see.

7 Senator Coons. You did say earlier this is the most
8 transparent Department of Justice in American history, we
9 have nothing to hide, and you started by saying we're here
10 to rebuild trust. Two decisions or two OLC opinions I'm
11 very interested in. I'm the senior Democrat on Defense and
12 Intelligence. I'm the most senior member of the Foreign
13 Relations Committee on my side who's currently serving on
14 this Committee. I'm curious as to why the most transparent
15 Department has refused to release the OLC opinion that
16 justifies the 66 strikes the military has conducted on
17 boats in the Caribbean, which have killed more than 220
18 people, either a redacted version or in a classified
19 setting to me and others who are in relevant decision
20 making positions.

21 Mr. Blanche. Well, Senator, we made the head of OLC
22 available on multiple occasions to explain that to you and
23 other members of the Committee, and that is extraordinarily
24 transparent and unprecedented that we've done that.
25 Whether an OLC opinion is released, there's a lot of

1 process that goes into that, but the idea that we were not
2 transparent about our legal basis there is absolutely not
3 true.

4 Senator Coons. Okay. Another chance to be
5 transparent: the FISA Court in March certified your
6 Section 702 proceedings, but found compliance deficiencies.
7 This is an important power of the Federal Government that
8 will soon be up again for a vote, and you have not
9 declassified that opinion. Senators Cotton and Warner,
10 Republican and Democrat leads on Intelligence, in April
11 wrote the Administration saying that they expected
12 declassification of this March opinion within 2 weeks, yet
13 it remains classified. You have a bipartisan request from
14 the leadership of Intel. Will you declassify it or make it
15 available to us?

16 Mr. Blanche. We'll continue to look at that. I agree
17 with you that that's a very important issue, and we need
18 702 reauthorized.

19 Senator Coons. Thank you. Last question, if I could.
20 The Safer Supervision Act is co-sponsored by Senators Lee,
21 Cornyn, Tillis, and Lankford, and it gives a path forward
22 to making sure that Federal probation and parole is more
23 effective. We've discussed it before. Will you meet with
24 me to talk about ways that this important criminal justice
25 reform supported by Federal law enforcement could move

1 forward?

2 Mr. Blanche. I think that that effort --

3 Chairman Grassley. Please give a short answer to
4 that.

5 Mr. Blanche. Yes, I very much agree with what you're
6 trying to do there, Senator.

7 Senator Coons. Thank you.

8 Chairman Grassley. Before I call on Senator Schmitt,
9 and after Schmitt gets done questioning, we're going to
10 take a 15-minute break, and that 15-minute break starts
11 when you leave the chair and be back in at the 15th minute.

12 Before then, I'd like to enter into the record
13 supporting your nomination from 382,000 members of the
14 National Fraternal Order of Police. The letter emphasized
15 "Mr. Blanche's distinguished record of public service and
16 his commitment to work closely with law enforcement across
17 the Nation." The letter states, "We believe Mr. Blanche's
18 leadership will help ensure that the Department of Justice
19 remains focused on public safety, the rule of law, and
20 providing unwavering support for the law enforcement
21 professionals who risk their lives daily to protect our
22 families."

23 Without objection, it'll be entered.

24 [The letter appears in the appendix:]

25 / COMMITTEE INSERT

1 Chairman Grassley. Senator Schmitt.

2 Senator Schmitt. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr.

3 Blanche, welcome.

4 You're entering this arena and this confirmation
5 hearing as the Nation's chief law enforcement officer at a
6 very interesting time in our country's history where the
7 folks on the other side of the dais, the Democrats, in my
8 view, have just taken an all-out assault on the men and
9 women of this country who serve in a law enforcement
10 capacity. We just a couple of months ago got through a
11 government shutdown where I was on the Senate floor
12 listening to things that I never heard, certainly, an
13 elected official say, in characterizing the men and women
14 who serve this country to enforce its laws, calling them
15 the Gestapo, President Trump's secret police, masked
16 mercenaries. This is insane, these calls to defund ICE,
17 this hammer-and-sickle wave that came through New York just
18 a few weeks ago that's now dominating the discussion on the
19 other side of the aisle. The central plank, of course, is
20 defunding the police, assaulting, overthrowing Western
21 civilization. This is not your grandfather's Democrat
22 Party, and you're fielding questions that I think are
23 totally unfair, but it's all meant, I think, to undermine
24 and demoralize.

25 I saw it in my time as Attorney General in Missouri

1 where we had a Soros-funded prosecutor who refused to
2 prosecute crime, and police officers, many retired early.
3 Fewer came into the ranks to protect and serve, and so
4 you're coming at an important time. I think President
5 Trump, like he has with the military, has inspired the men
6 and women on the front lines to serve. You're helping, I
7 think, restore that with your focus on violent crime, your
8 focus on fraud.

9 I heard one of my colleagues say that this is the most
10 troubled Department of Justice in history. I happened to
11 live through the previous Administration where you had a
12 Department of Justice completely weaponized against
13 political opponents. They tried to throw their chief
14 political opponent in jail, ruin his family's lives. You
15 were his lawyer to see some of that, and I was with you in
16 a courtroom in New York to witness that defense in one of
17 those cases; were aimed against Catholics in this country
18 who happen to attend a traditional Catholic Latin mass;
19 went after parents under the Patriot Act for showing up to
20 school board meetings to object to critical race theory or
21 the masking of their kids.

22 We lived through Jack Smith, and the Chairman has just
23 revealed new revelations, of course, that he was reading
24 text messages. By the way, Jack Smith testified under oath
25 he didn't do that. He testified that they just had the

1 phone logs. We know that's not true now. Jack Smith
2 should be subject to prosecution for lying to Congress.
3 So, this weaponization, let's draw a distinction. When you
4 go after your political opponents, that is a weaponization.
5 When you hold people accountable who weaponize the justice
6 system, that's not the same thing. So, you have a very
7 important job.

8 I want to highlight a few things that you've done in
9 your time as Acting Attorney General, hopefully as Attorney
10 General, if you're confirmed. You created the National
11 Fraud Enforcement Division. I think this is very, very
12 important. I think it's the tip of the iceberg what we're
13 seeing in Minneapolis, in California, and places that I
14 think the work will continue. Carried out the largest
15 healthcare fraud takedown in Department history, expanded
16 the fight against Medicaid fraud after the \$90 million
17 Minnesota fraud takedown. You secured six fraud
18 convictions involving more than \$1.1 billion in less than 3
19 weeks; cleared the backlog of immigration cases allowing
20 for more deportations. You filed a historic number of de-
21 naturalization cases. You secured major anti-DEI wins
22 against IBM and PayPal. You ended the EEOC's racist
23 disparate impact regime. You secured 450 years of prison
24 time for Antifa members involved in the terrorist attacks
25 against ICE. You prosecuted the Southern Poverty Law

1 Center for secretly funneling millions of dollars to the
2 KKK and neo-Nazis. That's a hell of a record in a hundred
3 days, but more work continues.

4 I want to talk about a few things, and I'm going to
5 allow you to answer to focus on. First, I think we have to
6 break this sanctuary city scam, the system. To the people
7 watching or listening at home, what is a sanctuary
8 jurisdiction? Here's what it means. It means that if you
9 are a criminal child rapist, and you're here illegally, and
10 you've been released from prison, they will not tell
11 Federal immigration authorities that that person is being
12 released. They would rather have that individual, that
13 monster released into the community than be deported.
14 That's how sick this regime is. And so, I was able to
15 secure in the ICE funding \$350 million to clean up this
16 mess to allow ICE in those sanctuary jurisdictions to
17 actually carry out those deportations, sanctuary cities be
18 damned. Will you use every tool that you have in your
19 toolbox to go after these sanctuary jurisdictions?

20 Mr. Blanche. I mean, absolutely. You just hit the
21 nail on the head when you described one example, but there
22 are thousands of examples of our law enforcement agents
23 being put at risk because, instead of going into a jail to
24 arrest somebody or take somebody who's here illegally, even
25 with a final order of deportation, that individual gets

1 released in the community, and it puts everybody in the
2 community at risk. It puts law enforcement at risk. It's
3 not consistent with the law. And so, yes, I definitely
4 pledge to you that we will do everything that we can in the
5 Department to combat that.

6 Senator Schmitt. The second one is to crush the
7 machinery that converts illegal conduct into political
8 power for the left, and I'm talking about the racial
9 gerrymandering, the straw donations, foreign money,
10 identity theft, fraudulent online contributions, the
11 nonprofits that finance extremism while lying to their
12 donors. Will you enforce the Constitution and Voting
13 Rights Act against unlawful racial gerrymandering and
14 investigate credible evidence of straw donations, foreign
15 contributions, identity fraud, and other illegal activity
16 through ActBlue or other fundraising platforms?

17 Mr. Blanche. Yes, of course, Senator. Yes.

18 Senator Schmitt. Thank you. Third, protect free
19 speech from the new censorship machine. Search engines
20 determine what information Americans find. We're more and
21 more reliant on these things. App stores determine which
22 platforms can reach the public. AI systems increasingly
23 determine which claims are treated as true, false,
24 respectable, extreme, or beyond discussion. Will you
25 enforce a zero tolerance policy for Federal officials who

1 pressure technology companies to suppress lawful speech,
2 and work with Congress to expose communications between
3 Federal agencies and the companies controlling search,
4 social media, app distribution, and AI?

5 Mr. Blanche. Absolutely. Yes, Senator.

6 Senator Schmitt. Thank you. I want to, for the 2-
7 and-a-half minutes I have left with my time, I guess, give
8 you an opportunity. You saw what happened to the
9 Department of Justice under Merrick Garland and the
10 dirtbag, Jack Smith, under Joe Biden's regime. What
11 lessons do you draw from that?

12 Mr. Blanche. The biggest one is that the Department
13 of Justice belongs in the business of protecting our
14 communities. And so, when I talked about during my opening
15 statement about bringing the violent crime rates down, and
16 combating fraud, and going after the fentanyl crisis in
17 this country, that's the lesson I learned is that we do not
18 need to be spending millions and millions of dollars
19 bringing hundreds and hundreds, if not thousands of
20 prosecutors to D.C. to go after, literally, an entire
21 Administration: yes, the President, yes, his family, but
22 also anybody that knew him, anybody that worked with him.
23 His gardener at Mar-a-Lago was targeted. We should not be
24 doing that. We should be arresting bad guys, and that's
25 what we're doing.

1 So, we're empowering assistant U.S. attorneys around
2 the country, FBI, ATF, Marshals, DEA, HSI agents to go out
3 and make communities safe. And in my mind, when it comes
4 to the Federal Government that's combating drug dealing,
5 combating illegal immigration, narcoterrorism, using our
6 HSTF task forces, and above all, and just as importantly is
7 fraud and bringing money that is stolen from the American
8 taxpayer and getting it back and putting the guys
9 responsible in prison, that's what I've learned is that we
10 can just go out and do our jobs, and we can do it.
11 There'll be noise in D.C. Like I said, we've prosecuted
12 nearly a hundred thousand informations and indictments
13 since January 20. We're talking about three or four, and
14 that's the message that I take to prosecutors around the
15 country.

16 Senator Schmitt. Thank you, and I also want to thank
17 you, early on with this Administration in Kansas City, but
18 specifically in St. Louis working with the Department, Kash
19 Patel, others, St. Louis got the largest infusion of
20 permanent FBI agents anywhere in the country, and they're
21 helping clean up the streets. People feel safer. It's a
22 great American turnaround as relates to crime. Those
23 numbers hopefully will continue, and I look forward to
24 working with you on those efforts as well.

25 Mr. Blanche. Thank you. We will. Thank you,

1 Senator.

2 Chairman Grassley. Before we take this 15-minute
3 break, I wanted to say that from 12:30 until 1:00, I'll be
4 in the Capitol to vote. Another Republican will chair the
5 meeting, so we're going to go on through the noon hour.
6 And so, we'll take a break now, and we'll be back at 11:45,
7 and Senator Blumenthal will be the first person to ask
8 questions.

9 [Recess.]

10 Chairman Grassley. I'll ask Senator Blumenthal, is it
11 quiet enough for you to proceed?

12 Senator Blumenthal. Yes, sir.

13 Chairman Grassley. Proceed then.

14 Senator Blumenthal. Thank you. Welcome back, Mr.
15 Blanche. Thank you for being here.

16 Mr. Blanche. Thank you.

17 MR. BERMAN: Thank you to your family, and I want to
18 join in thanking the men and women of the Department of
19 Justice for their service.

20 I want to begin where maybe we have some common
21 ground. You would agree that the Islamic Republic of Iran
22 is well known to detain, torture, even kill political
23 dissidents, including evangelical Christians, would you
24 not?

25 Mr. Blanche. Yes, Senator, they have done that. Yes.

1 Senator Blumenthal. And last week, the Iranian
2 American Legal Defense Fund filed a lawsuit alleging that
3 the Trump Administration has adopted a policy of
4 collaborating with the Islamic Republic of Iran to provide
5 details about asylum applicants. This is the United States
6 Government providing information regularly and frequently
7 to the Iranian Government about Iranian nationals who are
8 seeking asylum here in the United States. These are
9 declarations made under oath before the court about high
10 officials stationed here, with Iran getting information
11 from the United States Government and then the American
12 Government deporting hundreds of individuals, including
13 evangelical Christians, back to Iran where they face
14 torture, imprisonment, potential death. Were you or the
15 Department of Justice consulted about this policy?

16 Mr. Blanche. That's not our policy, Senator. We
17 would never send somebody home to be tortured. That's not
18 what the American people would expect of us. That's
19 certainly not what President Trump does. So, I'm not
20 familiar with the lawsuit you're talking about, but there's
21 no such policy.

22 Senator Blumenthal. Will you commit to investigate
23 these allegations?

24 Mr. Blanche. I know nothing about the lawsuit. When
25 you say, "commit to investigate allegations," we don't do

1 that, but certainly if the lawsuit needs to be answered and
2 part of that includes investigation, absolutely.

3 Senator Blumenthal. Well, you do investigate
4 allegations of illegality. This policy would clearly be
5 not only illegal --

6 Mr. Blanche. But there is no such policy.

7 Senator Blumenthal. -- but morally repugnant, would
8 it not? You agreed with me that it should not be the
9 policy of the United States to do it.

10 Mr. Blanche. But in your question, you're suggesting
11 there is such a policy. I'm telling you there is no such
12 policy.

13 Senator Blumenthal. Well, if there is no such policy,
14 then I presume you would investigate it.

15 Mr. Blanche. When I see the lawsuit -- I'm just not
16 familiar with it -- we will, of course, do what's
17 appropriate.

18 Senator Blumenthal. Well, you'd agree with me that it
19 would be wrong.

20 Mr. Blanche. That it would be wrong, meaning it would
21 be wrong to send somebody home to be tortured. Yes.

22 Senator Blumenthal. Let me ask you about allegations
23 in connection with David Gentile. I think we talked about
24 these allegations when you visited me. Thank you for
25 coming to my office.

1 In May of 2025, David Gentile was sentenced to 7 years
2 in prison for his role in an almost \$1.8 billion Ponzi-like
3 scheme that defrauded over 10,000 investors, many of them
4 middle-class retirees, of their hard-earned savings. And
5 when he was in prison, he boasted to fellow inmates and
6 others that he was going to be released because he paid
7 \$2.5 million for clemency. Evidence collected by the
8 Eastern District of New York supported those allegations,
9 and reportedly also included statements by Father Frank
10 Mann that he spoke to the President about David Gentile.
11 The Eastern District of New York was investigating these
12 allegations and reportedly received a call from one of your
13 top deputies instructing them about the concerns of the
14 Department of Justice. The investigation was stopped by
15 the Eastern District of New York.

16 I wrote to you on June 23 and United States Attorney
17 Joseph Nocella about these allegations, that an
18 investigation into this impropriety was shut down at the
19 request of your office. Did you have any involvement or
20 knowledge about the commutation of Mr. Gentile's sentence?

21 Mr. Blanche. President Trump, as I've said a couple
22 of times today, has full authority to pardon or commute
23 anybody convicted of a Federal crime.

24 Senator Blumenthal. That's not my question.

25 Mr. Blanche. So, I'm answering your question,

1 Senator.

2 Senator Blumenthal. Did you know that?

3 Mr. Blanche. I'm answering your question. So, my
4 communications with President Trump, I will not talk about.
5 He does not, nor should he. He has no obligation to
6 discuss pardon or commutations decisions with me, and he
7 has not. As far as what you just suggested about an
8 investigation, I believe you're referring to a news article
9 that was the result of apparent leaks, and I would caution
10 that there's falsehoods in those news articles.

11 Senator Blumenthal. I'm asking you whether you had
12 any involvement in commuting that sentence or in stopping
13 the investigation into the allegations of impropriety of
14 possibly payment to Father Frank Mann.

15 Mr. Blanche. And I answered the first question, but
16 when you say, "stopping an investigation," there's an
17 assumption built into your question that I will not
18 concede. We will not talk about whether investigations
19 exist or don't exist, and certainly some leak about
20 something that we supposedly did doesn't warrant an answer
21 either.

22 Senator Blumenthal. There was an investigation,
23 correct?

24 Mr. Blanche. No, that's my whole point in saying is
25 that there's an assumption baked into your question that I

1 don't think is true, meaning that we cannot comment on even
2 the existence of investigations like that.

3 Senator Blumenthal. You commented this morning to
4 Republican colleagues about several investigations.

5 Mr. Blanche. No, I haven't.

6 Senator Blumenthal. Well, you commented in response
7 to the Chairman about the FISA investigation.

8 Mr. Blanche. About the what? Excuse me?

9 Senator Blumenthal. The investigation that he asked
10 you about.

11 Mr. Blanche. So, Senator, my point is that you're
12 asking me questions about a news article, the source of
13 which was apparently leaks. It would be inappropriate for
14 me as the acting Attorney General to comment on such leaks
15 or news articles that you're referencing, but when it goes
16 --

17 Senator Blumenthal. I accept that you're not going to
18 answer my question, but I think there is a need for the
19 Inspector General to look into the investigation that was
20 apparently, according to these articles and other
21 information, stopped as a result of your intervention. Let
22 me move on.

23 In 2017, more than 10,000 9/11 victims filed suit
24 against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. That lawsuit is
25 heading to trial. Information was promised by President

1 Trump in September of 2019. That information has not been
2 provided. Will you commit to meet with those families and
3 provide the information they need for their lawsuit?

4 Mr. Blanche. Folks from my office have met with the
5 representatives of those families. We will commit to
6 continuing to have communications, of course.

7 Senator Blumenthal. And provide the information
8 they're seeking?

9 Mr. Blanche. Well, I don't know what the information
10 is you're talking about, so obviously, I can't just commit
11 to providing the information.

12 Senator Blumenthal. Well, let's talk about other
13 information, information about the Epstein abuses. Your
14 predecessor apologized to the Epstein survivors, with good
15 reason because, as you've said today, mistakes were made.
16 I'm asking you today, with Epstein survivors in this room,
17 to apologize to them.

18 Mr. Blanche. Well, so my heart breaks for every
19 victim of any sexual crime, whether it's involving Mr.
20 Epstein or somebody else, and so if you're asking me to
21 apologize that this happened to them, of course,
22 absolutely. This is a horrible thing, which is why this
23 Department of Justice, this Administration is focused very
24 heavily on going after these predators. And so, yes, of
25 course, that's part of my job is being empathetic to the

1 victims of crime.

2 Senator Blumenthal. Will you apologize to them for
3 the mishandling and mistakes that were made by the United
4 States Department of Justice?

5 Mr. Blanche. I will absolutely say that any mistake
6 that we made should not have been made, and I very much --

7 MR. BERMAN: Well, they're --

8 [Cross-talking.]

9 Mr. Blanche. I can answer the question or you can
10 just interrupt me, Senator, but I am answering your
11 question. I very much, and I have said this to anybody
12 that asked publicly before. Any mistake that was made is
13 not appropriate, and so, yes, I am sorry that in about 1
14 percent of the documents, mistakes were made. But what I
15 will say on top of that is we put tons of resources to
16 rectifying those mistakes immediately, including pulling
17 down documents within minutes of being informed that there
18 were mistakes, potential mistakes made, and working 24/7 to
19 rectify any mistakes, and that's what I would expect the
20 victims would want us to do, and their counsel and this
21 body as well.

22 Senator Blumenthal. And you'd agree with me, wouldn't
23 you, that you can well meet with any of the survivors or
24 victims with their counsel present? You said you can't
25 meet with them, but you could meet with them if they're --

1 Mr. Blanche. I never said I can't meet with them. I
2 said if they were represented, I had to meet through
3 counsel, but of course I can meet with them. I'm the
4 Acting Attorney General of the United States, so yes, I
5 can. I very strongly believe that for these victims to
6 tell their stories and the evidence that they have, they
7 should meet, like any victim of a crime, with the FBI or a
8 law enforcement agent, and that we will do everything we
9 can to prosecute if we can.

10 Senator Blumenthal. The judge in Florida referred to
11 your misconduct -- she concluded that there was misconduct
12 and misrepresentation and improper purpose in that legal
13 action -- to the Bar of New York for potential discipline,
14 including losing your law license. I know you disagree
15 with the result of the ruling. Has that kind of referral
16 ever happened by a Federal judge for an Attorney General of
17 the United States? Can you do that?

18 Mr. Blanche. I don't know, but I'll tell you
19 something: that judge never asked us to respond. She
20 never gave us an opportunity to respond to anything and she
21 didn't refer me. She just asked that a copy of the order
22 be provided the New York Bar because there are several
23 activist groups that have filed complaints against me. So,
24 listen, as I said earlier, I think anybody on this
25 Committee, especially the lawyers that have practiced, can

1 read that opinion and reach their own conclusions, but I
2 very much disagree with the judge's insinuations about me,
3 and we're going to do what we can to make that right.

4 Senator Blumenthal. One last question. Would you
5 agree with me that agents of the United States should not
6 fire their weapons into cars, unless there is an imminent
7 threat?

8 Senator Britt. Mr. Chairman?

9 Chairman Grassley. Give a short answer to that.

10 Mr. Blanche. There's a well-established standard as
11 to when an agent can discharge their firearm, and I think
12 that that's something that should be followed in every
13 case.

14 Senator Blumenthal. And that includes not firing
15 weapons into cars.

16 Senator Britt. Mr. Chairman --

17 Chairman Grassley. Well, do you want to respond to --

18 Mr. Blanche. I mean, there's not really a response.
19 It requires Federal agents to follow the rules.

20 Chairman Grassley. Then let's move on. Before I call
21 on Senator Britt, I want another letter supporting the
22 nominee from the American Border Story, a national
23 organization representing 300 angel families. Quoting from
24 the letter, "The families we work with are not focused on
25 politics. They want leaders who take crime seriously, who

1 understand the national security implications of open
2 border criminal networks, and who will prioritize victims
3 over ideology. We believe Todd Blanche understands that
4 responsibility and would approach the Office of Attorney
5 General with seriousness it demands."

6 Without objection, that'll be entered in the record.

7 [The letter appears in the appendix:]

8 / COMMITTEE INSERT

9 Chairman Grassley. Senator Britt.

10 Senator Britt. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I think
11 that's an excellent segue. I appreciate your commitment to
12 all of the victims, the Epstein victims, your commitment to
13 hear from them and fight for them. Thank you for saying
14 that today. I only wish that my Democratic colleagues had
15 that same level of conviction when it came to meeting with
16 the families of those who have lost loved ones at the hands
17 of illegal aliens, so thank you for that letter. Thank you
18 for your commitment. I can only hope that they will answer
19 the call and meet with their own constituencies who,
20 unfortunately, have lost ones that they hold dear.

21 Mr. Blanche, I want to applaud the work that you and
22 DOJ have done to reduce crime and violent crime across the
23 country. We've heard it a number of times here today, both
24 in the Chairman's opening, to Senator Moody talking about
25 it, to you talking about it. We currently have the lowest

1 murder rate that we've had since 1900. When you're looking
2 at violent crime arrests, we are up 184 percent. This is
3 real results. This is what you're supposed to be doing:
4 keeping Americans safe. We know that you've done that
5 through a number of ways: task force and joint operations,
6 interagency cooperation. We've seen those task forces
7 successfully pursue numerous cases in our State related to
8 major drug trafficking, related to firearms trafficking,
9 all of which has been linked to, in many cases, you know,
10 broader criminal enterprises. So, we're glad that our
11 children are safer and that our communities are safer.

12 What I'd like to know from you because we've seen in
13 Alabama this have tremendous results. We've even seen in
14 one case, a corrupt local law enforcement officer in the
15 Southern District of Alabama, who had engaged in a range of
16 criminal activities in his capacity as an officer, being
17 held accountable through this work. Based on what I've
18 seen in Alabama, I hope that you continue this all across
19 the country. Can you speak to the work of these task
20 forces and the success that you've seen and how you intend
21 to build upon this work moving forward if and when
22 confirmed?

23 Mr. Blanche. Yes. So, the Homeland Security Task
24 Force regime that we've set up in every single State and
25 every single district in this country is designed to do

1 just what you were describing, so work not just with the
2 Federal Government, not just DOJ, but to work with
3 Department of Homeland Security, sheriffs, cops, local
4 prosecutors, local law enforcement, and assistant U.S.
5 attorneys to go into that community and eradicate it of
6 human trafficking, drug dealers, narcoterrorism.

7 It's been set up for almost a year in most places, and
8 the results are evident in the statistics that we show, but
9 they're really more evident when I go out to U.S.
10 attorney's offices and meet with HSTF groups like I do all
11 the time. To a person they say, this is what we needed
12 forever. This is what works, having law enforcement get
13 together in a room and say we need to tackle this gang, or
14 this apartment building has a drug problem, or even this
15 individual needs to be targeted because he's a violent
16 felon, and he needs to go off the streets.

17 It's basic law enforcement that I've done for a long
18 time, that President Trump echoes and trumpets and has done
19 since January 20. I think that's why we're seeing the
20 success that we're seeing, and we're not slowing down.
21 HSTFs are up and running full speed ahead, and I hope that
22 we continue to still see the results that we've seen over
23 the past 10 months or so.

24 Senator Britt. Thank you for your commitment to that
25 and all the work that you've done. I want to take a brief

1 moment. Our distinguished late colleague, Senator Graham,
2 was excited about your nomination. He was passionate about
3 many things, which we saw here in this Committee just in
4 amazing ways. One of the things that he was a champion of
5 was the unborn, and that is a deeply held conviction that
6 we both have, and I want to talk to you and address the
7 issue of the chemical abortion drug that we have seen just
8 spread coast to coast.

9 As you know, pursuant to a Biden-era administrative
10 action, the FDA, there is no longer an in-person dispensing
11 requirement in place for the drug, for mifepristone. It
12 allows it to literally be disbursed across State lines all
13 across the country. We are losing children, and we are
14 putting women in harm's way. Look, it has no oversight, no
15 safeguard.

16 I got to hear the story of Jona's Affholder, who's
17 here with us today and I am so grateful for her willingness
18 to be here, but I got to hear it firsthand yesterday. I
19 know many people have read her story in recent news
20 articles about her then boyfriend, now ex-boyfriend, a
21 doctor no less, actually forcing a crushed abortion pill
22 into her mouth in the middle of the night, then taking her
23 keys, holding her hostage so that she could not go get
24 help. This is sick and twisted and must stop. He used his
25 ex-wife's information to buy those drugs online to kill his

1 own child and to endanger Jona's life, and sadly, her story
2 is one of many.

3 And so, can you commit to me today that this
4 Administration and DOJ will prioritize taking meaningful
5 and thoughtful action to address the dangers that occurred
6 in the current status quo to women all over this country?

7 Mr. Blanche. Absolutely, Senator, and it's not only
8 what the Department of Justice can do, but it's what the
9 FDA is doing right now for the first time in a decade,
10 actually doing real studies about the safety and the
11 appropriateness of these drugs. And, you know, I've seen
12 video myself of what appears to be pills coming even from
13 overseas to young women, and it doesn't matter who applies
14 for it. Anybody can get it. There's no instructions.
15 They just come dumped out of a little plastic bag, and it's
16 wrong, and I very much commit our resources to stopping
17 this.

18 Senator Britt. Thank you very much. I want to turn
19 to an issue that I also raised with former Attorney General
20 Bondi, and that's illegal offshore gaming and the concern
21 in the rise of illegal gaming amongst minors. In 2024, a
22 study found that individuals who began gambling before the
23 age of 18 are 50 percent more likely to develop an
24 addiction to gambling. This has become a major issue among
25 America's youth, in particular, America's young men.

1 Just last year in the Northern District of Alabama, we
2 saw a case where 10 men pleaded guilty to managing a sports
3 betting operation and accepted over \$2 billion in wagers
4 via an offshore server located in Costa Rica. Senator
5 Blumenthal and I have worked together on this issue and
6 recently introduced the GAME Act, which would prohibit
7 social media companies and advertising websites from
8 targeting minors with sports betting advertising online.
9 We also sent a letter to DOJ encouraging the Department to
10 use its existing statutory authorities to pursue injunctive
11 relief and to block illegal offshore gaming operations.

12 I want to tell you how much I appreciate the response.
13 It was very substantive that I got to that letter, but can
14 you also commit to me today that you're going to make this
15 issue a priority, and take robust action to combat the
16 reach of illegal gaming operations within the United States
17 and then, in particular, the targeting of minors through
18 this?

19 Mr. Blanche. Yes, Senator. Absolutely.

20 Senator Britt. Thank you. The U.S. Census Bureau
21 reported over a decade, between 2010 and 2020, that the
22 over 65 population in the United States experienced the
23 largest-ever 10-year numeric gain and percentage point
24 increase in terms of share of the overall population. In
25 its annual report to Congress last December, the FTC noted

1 that total fraud losses by older Americans, defined as age
2 of 60 and older, increased almost fourfold from 2020 to
3 2024, shooting up from \$600 million in 2020 to \$2.4 billion
4 in 2024. As our society ages, and it will continue to be a
5 problem that we must take robust action to address,
6 particularly given technological advances and other ways
7 that this fraud is occurring.

8 I introduced the GUARD Act with Senator Gillibrand,
9 and it would allow State and local law enforcement agencies
10 to use certain Federal grant funding to utilize blockchain
11 for investigating financial fraud. It would also permit
12 Federal law enforcement to assist State and local law
13 enforcement with tracing tools for blockchain technology.
14 I'm thrilled it was reported out of this Committee by voice
15 vote earlier this year. I know that DOJ has programs in
16 place, like Elder Justice Initiative, but can you speak
17 specifically to DOJ's efforts with respect to elder
18 financial fraud and the extent to which we will work to
19 continue to make this a priority under your leadership, and
20 the importance of collaboration with State and local law
21 enforcement officers as we work to bring justice to these
22 people who have been abused?

23 Mr. Blanche. Yes, Senator. We are very focused, not
24 only at Main Justice, but at every U.S. attorney's office,
25 on protecting our elderly who are absolutely victims of

1 scams of any sort. And many of the scams are coming from
2 overseas, from Burma and from literally entire buildings
3 filled with individuals cold calling our senior citizens,
4 trying to get them to give them money or send them money.
5 And so, we've charged, I think, over 300 this year alone.
6 We'll keep on doing that, and it has been a priority, as it
7 should be, and it will remain a priority of the Department
8 to target these criminals, again, many of whom are not even
9 in this country going after our senior citizens.

10 Senator Britt. Thank you so much for your service,
11 and I look forward to supporting your nomination.

12 Mr. Blanche. Thank you, Senator.

13 Chairman Grassley. Before I call on Senator Hirono, I
14 have another letter for the nominee supporting Mr. Blanche
15 from the Americans United for Life, a pro-life
16 organization. "Mr. Blanche's commitment to respecting
17 human life is evident in his actions as Acting Attorney
18 General. We at Americans United for Life are confident in
19 Mr. Blanche's commitment to a fair and even application of
20 law."

21 Without objection, it'll be entered in the record.

22 [The letter appears in the appendix:]

23 / COMMITTEE INSERT

24 Chairman Grassley. Senator Hirono.

25 Senator Hirono. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome,

1 Mr. Blanche.

2 To ensure the fitness to serve of all nominees who
3 come before any of my Committees, I ask the following two
4 initial questions. Since you became a legal adult, have
5 you ever made unwanted requests for sexual favors or
6 committed any verbal or physical harassment or assault of a
7 sexual nature?

8 Mr. Blanche. No, Senator.

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

11 Mr. Blanche. No, Senator.

12 Senator Hirono. Mr. Blanche, over the course of the
13 past 5 months, the New Mexico Department of Justice has
14 talked to your staff about getting access to information
15 for its investigation into alleged crime at Jeffrey
16 Epstein's Zorro Ranch. Will you and your team continue to
17 cooperate with the New Mexico Department of Justice and
18 help it get the information it needs?

19 Mr. Blanche. Yes, we're continuing to work with them,
20 yes. Yes, Senator.

21 Senator Hirono. Thank you. Mr. Blanche, at an April
22 8 press conference, a reporter asked you a question about
23 President Trump's desire to see his perceived political
24 enemies prosecuted. You answered, "That is his right, and
25 indeed, it is his duty to do that." To clarify, Mr.

1 Blanche, do you believe it is the President's right and
2 duty to order the investigation or prosecution of his
3 perceived enemies? Yes or no.

4 Mr. Blanche. I can't answer that yes or no. That
5 wasn't the question, and my answer was that as the
6 President of the United States, under Article II, he's in
7 charge of the Department of Justice, and so my answer
8 reflects that idea --

9 Senator Hirono. I think what the --

10 Mr. Blanche. -- not that he has a right to go after
11 his political enemies.

12 Senator Hirono. Reclaiming my time. I think that
13 what the President meant was pretty clear, and I just
14 wanted to know whether you thought that that is indeed his
15 right and duty to prosecute his perceived enemies, so let
16 me get to that. Investigations of the President's
17 perceived enemies aren't theoretical. They are happening.

18 For example, last August, President Trump posted on
19 social media that George Soros should be charged with RICO.
20 Weeks later, one of your deputies directed several U.S.
21 attorney's offices to investigate Soros' charitable
22 foundations for violating the RICO statute. Mr. Blanche,
23 to confirm, were the U.S. attorney's offices asked to
24 launch these investigations because of the President's
25 post? Yes or no?

1 Mr. Blanche. I'm not even confirming that they were
2 asked to do so --

3 Senator Hirono. Well, the President definitely --

4 Mr. Blanche. -- but most certainly not because of any
5 Truth from President Trump.

6 Senator Hirono. Excuse me. The President definitely
7 posted that Mr. Soros should be charged with RICO, and lo
8 and behold, several weeks later, that is exactly what your
9 office sought to have done. Since last year, DOJ has sued
10 30 States seeking their voter lists. Fourteen of those
11 lawsuits have been resolved by Federal judges. Mr.
12 Blanche, did any of those 14 Federal court judges from
13 across the country agree with DOJ's legal position? Again,
14 yes or no.

15 Mr. Blanche. With some of the legal positions, yes.

16 Senator Hirono. Pardon?

17 Mr. Blanche. The answer to the question is, yes, some
18 of the judges agreed with some --

19 Senator Hirono. Fourteen judges?

20 Mr. Blanche. Agreed with some of our legal positions,
21 and most of those cases are under appeal.

22 Senator Hirono. Actually, that's not correct. The
23 answer is actually no. These 14 Federal judges -- some of
24 them were Trump appointees -- disagreed with DOJ's position
25 in terms of getting access to these voter rolls.

1 Mr. Blanche. Well, I think the --

2 Senator Hirono. It's all part of DOJ's attempt with
3 the President's attempt at election interference. We know
4 that Federal judges are a problem for you, certainly a
5 problem for President Trump, because they actually care
6 about facts and evidence. And that's why last fall, at a
7 Federalist Society event, you called for young lawyers at
8 that event to join you in fighting a war, and you said, "We
9 need you because it's a war, and it's something we will not
10 win unless we keep on fighting." The war that you were
11 talking about was against Federal judges who were ruling
12 against the Administration, correct?

13 Mr. Blanche. No.

14 Senator Hirono. Well, then do you believe that judges
15 should be impeached based on their rulings against this
16 Administration and the President? Yes or no.

17 Mr. Blanche. No. No, I don't believe that.

18 Senator Hirono. On that you disagree with the
19 President because he believes judges should be impeached
20 for disagreeing with him. President Trump sees DOJ not
21 only as a tool to attack his enemies, but also useful for
22 helping his friends. To that end, on May 18, you signed an
23 Attorney General order establishing funding and setting out
24 requirements for the so-called anti-weaponization fund,
25 correct? Did you sign such an order?

1 Mr. Blanche. Yes. I did sign that document, yes.

2 Senator Hirono. Have you rescinded that order?

3 Mr. Blanche. Yes. The order is no longer in effect.

4 Senator Hirono. No, that --

5 Mr. Blanche. There is no weaponization fund, correct.

6 Senator Hirono. Mr. Blanche, that is not my question.

7 My question is, did you rescind that order?

8 Mr. Blanche. Yes. I'm doing it under oath right now.

9 Senator Hirono. No, no, the fact --

10 Mr. Blanche. It does not exist.

11 Senator Hirono. When you answer that there's no fund,

12 that is not rescinding the order because you can resurrect

13 that order at any time. So, actually your answer is, no,

14 you have not rescinded that order.

15 Mr. Blanche, one of your first acts as a Deputy

16 Attorney General was to issue a memo eviscerating DOJ's

17 enforcement work against crypto criminals. Crypto crime

18 surged in 2025. Mr. Blanche, are you aware that Americans

19 reported over \$11 billion in crypto fraud losses to the FBI

20 last year?

21 Mr. Blanche. Our crypto enforcement is way up

22 compared to a year and a half ago, so I didn't eviscerate

23 anything. To the contrary actually. We empowered AUSAs

24 around the country to go after criminals in the right

25 circumstances, and we are doing --

1 Senator Hirono. Mr. Blanche --

2 Mr. Blanche. And we continue to do it.

3 Senator Hirono. -- I take it you are not aware that
4 there were reports of over \$11 billion in crypto fraud
5 reported to the FBI. That was my question. Are you aware,
6 or are you not aware?

7 Mr. Blanche. Are you talking about the fraud that we
8 have prosecuted, that \$11 billion?

9 Senator Hirono. No, I'm talking about the \$11 billion
10 worth of crypto crime. This is a pretty simple question.

11 Mr. Blanche. I just don't understand the question.

12 Senator Hirono. Are you or are you not aware, but it
13 doesn't seem you're aware because you're making all kinds
14 of excuses. The fact is that crypto enforcement, you
15 eviscerated that work that your Department is supposed to
16 be doing. And so, anyway, Mr. Blanche, when you issued
17 your memo ending crypto crime enforcement, you held
18 significant amounts of cryptocurrency yourself, and I sent
19 you several letters asking you about it, and I am still
20 awaiting your answer.

21 Mr. Blanche, it is clear to me that your leadership is
22 going to be a continuation of what we have seen so far at
23 the Trump Department of Justice, or more likely to be
24 called the Department of Retribution and Corruption. You
25 see nothing wrong with the President treating DOJ as his

1 own personal law firm, to use as a weapon against his
2 perceived enemies and as a way of helping his friends, and
3 as a tool to interfere with the upcoming elections. The
4 States run elections in this country, but you want to
5 insert DOJ at every step of the process, suing the States
6 with frivolous claims and sending threatening letters to
7 secretaries of state. You want to suppress the votes of
8 American citizens who will have a chance to resoundingly
9 reject the President's corruption at the ballot box this
10 November.

11 You signed a memo eviscerating DOJ's cryptocurrency
12 enforcement work, leading to a surge in Americans being
13 victimized by cryptocurrency fraud. You also championed a
14 slush fund for the President's allies who attacked police
15 officers on January 6. From the beginning, we all knew
16 that that's what this fund was for, but now we have
17 findings of fact from a Federal judge concluding that the
18 fund came out of a fake lawsuit filed solely to lend an air
19 of legitimacy to the President's attempt to compensate his
20 insurrectionist allies. You played a key role in
21 attempting to perpetuate this fraud on American taxpayers,
22 and you oversaw the botched release of the Epstein files,
23 denying justice once again to survivors who have been
24 waiting so long for it.

25 You have no business being the Attorney General of the

1 United States of America. I certainly urge my colleagues
2 to vote against your confirmation. Thank you, Mr.
3 Chairman.

4 Chairman Grassley. Mr. Blanche, would like you to
5 respond?

6 Mr. Blanche. Chairman, on the crypto point, our
7 crypto prosecutions are way up, and it is very true that
8 crypto fraud is a thing and it's still happening, but
9 getting rid of a task force of a bunch of lawyers in
10 Washington, D.C. did nothing more than empower AUSAs around
11 the country to bring cases, which is what they've done.
12 So, I'm proud of the work that we're doing in that space,
13 and we'll continue to do it.

14 Chairman Grassley. Before I call on Senator Tillis,
15 we've been talking about political prosecutions. You've
16 been criticized and the Department's been criticized, but I
17 wish you'd spare me the outrage. They cheered on Biden as
18 he weaponized the Justice Department targeting President
19 Trump, congressional Republicans, parents, Catholics, and
20 conservative Americans nationwide. So, I think that the
21 other party has zero credibility on this issue.

22 Moreover, let's look at some of the so-called
23 political prosecutions underway. How about the Southern
24 Poverty Law Center? The group's apparently been funding
25 extremist groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the National

1 Socialist Movement. How about Don Lemon and the ICE
2 protestors? They stormed and intimidated folks in the
3 middle of a church service. Those are not political
4 prosecutions. Protecting the taxpayers and other First
5 Amendment rights is the responsibility of the government
6 and the Justice Department. Senator Tillis.

7 Senator Tillis. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I'm going
8 to take up where you just left off. Thank you for being
9 before the hearing. I think you're doing very well, Mr.
10 Blanche.

11 I'm going to kind of ascend to the rarefied era of the
12 moral high ground here for a minute. As I've heard some of
13 the Democrats talking about this Administration, it's
14 almost as if they weren't here when the Biden
15 Administration did the indictments against President Trump.
16 We've already heard talk about Jack Smith. We haven't
17 talked about the way that they dealt with a family member
18 who was being indicted in Hunter Biden. I don't remember
19 them saying anything during those days in Judiciary
20 Committee. I don't think I remember them ramping up the
21 freedom of access to clinic entrances and trying to arrest
22 pro-life people from the law that they decided to ratchet
23 up in 1994, a couple of important cases there.

24 And then the January 6 Capitol riot prosecutions. The
25 fact of the matter is, and I'll get to this in a minute,

1 the part I don't like about it, but hundreds or thousands
2 of people's lives were destroyed because they did something
3 stupid that day. And there's a vast difference between
4 doing something stupid and doing something that destroys
5 your career and ruins you financially. And this
6 Administration, the Biden Administration tapped on the
7 emotions of the time to over-prosecute and weaponize the
8 DOJ, and went after people that I believe deserved a pardon
9 because they weren't the people that attacked police
10 officers. They weren't the people who knowingly destroyed
11 the Capitol. They weren't the people who proudly went in,
12 like the QAnon Shaman, and pretended like he'd taken the
13 Senate ground. They're the people that get me mad, which
14 is why I'm not going to talk about them anymore.

15 But it's remarkable how it's almost as if that Men in
16 Black, that device they use to erase their memories, it's
17 remarkable that these people sat before this Committee when
18 all that was going on and not a whiff. I hate duplicity,
19 and I hate situational ethics, and I want to lay the
20 groundwork to say I was against that, and I'm also against
21 some of the decisions of the President. Not you, Mr.
22 Blanche. You work for somebody, and you got to do what
23 you're told to do, and I hope you stay within the ethical
24 bounds of the law. You have to answer to the bars and
25 everyone else. But it's just jarring to hear people

1 criticize this Administration when they can't look in the
2 mirror and ask themselves why they weren't criticizing an
3 Administration when they happen to have a blue jersey.

4 Now, my criticism of the Administration with the red
5 jersey. January 6, I have searched heaven and earth and I
6 haven't found anything except a passing comment at a C-SPAN
7 conference. So, can you tell me definitively that you
8 think that any Capitol Police officer who was harmed on
9 January the 6 was a victim of a heinous crime at the hands
10 of the person who did it?

11 Mr. Blanche. Yes, and should have been prosecuted and
12 was.

13 Senator Tillis. And they were, and so just with the
14 members, please, you know, as long as you can prove you've
15 been consistent, use those soundbites, but don't use them
16 when you look the other way when, fundamentally, at the
17 abstract level, President Biden did everything that you're
18 accusing President Trump of doing. And a part of what
19 we've got to get rid of, Mr. Blanche, is this political
20 physics going on. American people are an exceptional
21 people, and they always like to best each other, and what
22 I've seen happening here is when we have a bad action of
23 one Administration, I'll be damned if we don't repeat it
24 with the other one. I want leadership that says we're
25 going to ratchet things down and not make the heinous

1 mistakes that the Biden Administration did.

2 Let's be better than them, not better at prosecuting
3 people that maybe we shouldn't or take a little bit more
4 time before we indict them, but let's just be better than
5 them. Let's set an example and stop this spiraling, or the
6 next Congress that I will not be a part of, will be talking
7 about it again, or in 2029, if a Democrat President comes
8 in, they're going to up the ante, and they're going to go
9 right after the behavior of this Administration as an
10 example of why they should because this Administration has
11 done the same thing to justify some of their behavior.

12 I'm not criticizing you, but I'm trying to just cut
13 through the rhetoric and let people all know that we are at
14 this place today, in part, because of the actions of the
15 Biden Administration and the weaponization that I even saw
16 under Garland, who I generally supported. So, let's just
17 be real here, people. If you're going to criticize one
18 Administration, look in the mirror before you do it.

19 Now, Mr. Blanche, I want to stick a fork in this
20 turkey of a 1776 fund, and you've said that it's moot.
21 I've had colleagues here who are attorneys. I'm not an
22 attorney. I'm a business consultant. I see a problem, I
23 want to solve it. This is a problem. It should never be
24 paid out. You've said that it's moot. Others, these smart
25 attorneys that I'm surrounded by, I think that the courts

1 are probably going to deal with it, but why should we waste
2 the court capacity on this issue if I could walk to the
3 Senate floor with an agreed-to piece of text coming from
4 the Administration that just renders this whole thing dead,
5 gone?

6 I don't need approps probes language. I don't need a
7 statement from the Administration. All I need is language
8 to say everybody around here said it's over. So, why can't
9 we agree to language that I could walk down to the Senate
10 floor and get a UC, and dare the Democrats to oppose ending
11 this, and dare a Republican, too, if the President supports
12 it? Why is that a bad strategy?

13 Mr. Blanche. It's not. I mean, certainly the
14 Department of Justice and the White House has worked with
15 you and your colleagues to come up with language. We do
16 not object that path or including it in some other --

17 Senator Tillis. I want to make the distinction,
18 though, because I know that Senator Collins and the
19 Appropriations team are working on this language. I don't
20 know if you've been paying attention to Congress. You've
21 got your own job to do, but we're not necessarily getting
22 along really well right now on the party lines. I mean,
23 Schumer's already threatening a government shutdown. We
24 haven't even had appropriations discussions, you know,
25 except ongoing negotiations. He's already threatening a

1 shutdown, so that language could be in a bill that's dead
2 on arrival because nobody's going to do it.

3 My question is who on earth, who in this Senate
4 chamber would raise an objection if we were able to put
5 something on the floor that ended this debate? The only
6 reason I think that a Democrat would be opposed to it is
7 they love milking this thing for what it is. I want to
8 stick a fork in it, and can I get your commitment to maybe
9 provide us with some technical assistance on what that
10 language would look like?

11 Mr. Blanche. Absolutely.

12 Senator Tillis. Thank you. Mr. Blanche, I did want
13 to just echo, and, Mr. Chairman, I know I caught him off
14 guard. I can seek unanimous consent to put into the record
15 the letter that Senator Cornyn and I sent to Mr. Blanche.

16 Senator Lee. [Presiding.] Without objection.

17 [The letter appears in the appendix:]

18 / COMMITTEE INSERT

19 Senator Tillis. So, that's the letter on the issue
20 that Senator Britt most recently brought up. I think
21 there's a way to solve that, and I have confidence in your
22 ability to do it, Mr. Blanche, but it is very important.

23 And I guess back to the pardons, I get pretty
24 emotional about that. I think we need to do a better job
25 of looking through the pardons process, okay? I've talked

1 about the January 6 pardons, but in this Administration,
2 and I'm no fan of Ed Martin. That's exactly why he'll
3 never get confirmed in the U.S. Senate as long as I'm here.
4 That's only 172 days. Maybe he can come back next year,
5 but I think the pardons process is something else we have
6 to look at.

7 The Democrats are criticizing this Administration for
8 pardons. You take a look at the egregious list of pardons
9 in the Biden Administration. Let's not forget that the
10 Biden Administration also had prospective pardons, get-out-
11 of-jail-free card. I heard people criticizing some of the
12 get-out-of-audit arguments for the 1776 agreement. Have
13 they all forgotten that Biden in the 11th hour gave
14 prospective pardons to people who hadn't even been charged
15 with anything?

16 Again, the point that I'm trying to make, folks, is
17 you're all victims of political physics. There was no
18 criticism about that then, and now we're trying to
19 criticize this President for pardons that I've criticized.
20 So, the point here, and I do believe that in the Trump
21 Administration, I have talked about the January 6 pardons,
22 but I'm concerned that the Binance CEO got pardoned. I'm
23 concerned that there was talk about a corporation getting a
24 pardon. So, I'd be very curious, if you're confirmed, if
25 we could sit down and understand how that process goes, and

1 to what extent we can have visibility into these people
2 getting pardons, starting with a lot of the pardons that
3 came out of the Biden Administration. Can I get your
4 commitment, if confirmed, to walk through that process?

5 Mr. Blanche. Of course. Yes, Senator.

6 Senator Tillis. Thank you, Mr. Blanche. You've done
7 a great job today.

8 Senator Lee. Senator Booker.

9 Senator Booker. Good afternoon, Mr. Blanche.

10 Mr. Blanche. Good afternoon.

11 Senator Booker. Our President has a very well-
12 documented history of attempting to corruptly influence
13 government officials to advance his own personal interests.
14 He called the Republican Secretary of Georgia asking him to
15 find enough votes to overturn the election. He withheld
16 military aid to pressure Zelensky to investigate Joe
17 Biden's son. For these things, he has been impeached.
18 He's been indicted in Georgia because he uses his power to
19 unjustly influence people.

20 When a President routinely pressures public officials
21 for his own personal benefit, the Department of Justice has
22 to remain independent. This brings me really to you, and I
23 think what has you at the center of so much concern is that
24 you seek to lead the Department of Justice after being the
25 President's personal lawyer. The American people are

1 really entitled to know whether your allegiance to the rule
2 of law is your focus, or your allegiance to one man who
3 clearly has an insatiable appetite for revenge, self-
4 enrichment, and the abuse of power. So, I want to talk
5 about your record.

6 Under you, the Department has prosecuted people that
7 have caught folks on both sides of the political aisle by
8 surprise: Jim Comey, Leticia James, my colleague, Adam
9 Schiff, Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook. This casts a
10 shadow over any ideas of independence. You directed the
11 arrest of Mayor Ras Baraka of my City of Newark. You
12 weren't at Delaney Hall on May 9, 2025, when he was
13 arrested, but yes or no, did you have a conversation with
14 Special Agent in Charge Ricky Patel ordering him to arrest
15 Mayor Baraka?

16 Mr. Blanche. I had a conversation. I didn't order
17 him to arrest. I authorized the arrest, which is my job.

18 Senator Booker. So, you were not there, and we have
19 body camera footage of him then moving and saying, "We are
20 arresting the mayor right now per" -- this is his quote --
21 "the Deputy Attorney General of the United States." I want
22 to put that into the record, your comments there, and the
23 District Court, assessing all of your conduct, admonished
24 the Department of Justice. This is the quote of the
25 Federal judge: "Your role is not to advance political

1 agendas. Your allegiance is to the impartial application
2 of the law and to uphold due process for all." But this is
3 just one example cited by over 1,200 current and former
4 Department of Justice officials appointed under Presidents
5 of both parties who warned that you should not be in this
6 position because of your inability to be independent from
7 your personal allegiance to Donald Trump over the rule of
8 law.

9 I met yesterday with Epstein survivors. Some of them
10 are here in the room today. Congress, in a bipartisan
11 fashion, passed the Epstein Files Transparency Act because
12 the American people were demanding justice, yet you failed
13 to abide by that law and release the files by the deadline
14 established by the law. And when the files were finally
15 released, you failed to protect the survivors that that law
16 was intended to protect. Survivors' personal information,
17 including names, phone numbers, home addresses, and images,
18 were released. Powerful people were redacted. Survivors
19 were subjected to re-traumatization. More than 1,200
20 victims, yet only two people have ever been prosecuted:
21 Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell.

22 Now, I was stunned earlier by your conversation with
23 one of my colleagues that you wouldn't even commit to
24 meeting with the survivors, but you did meet with Ghislaine
25 Maxwell. Your claim that you can't meet with these victims

1 because they're represented by counsel is utter nonsense.
2 Counsel can be present or a client can waive their right to
3 have counsel, but you're a lawyer. You know this. That
4 was not truthful what you said to my colleague. You said
5 that they should meet with the FBI. All of these women
6 have reported their crimes decades ago, but yet you won't
7 meet with them. What you will do is meet with Ghislaine
8 Maxwell. Over a year ago, you sat with her and you
9 publicly said you were seeking the truth.

10 So, let's talk about what that two-day meeting
11 produced. Did your interview with Ms. Maxwell lead to a
12 single additional person being charged? Yes or no.

13 Mr. Blanche. No.

14 Senator Booker. Did it lead to a single new
15 investigation? Yes or no.

16 Mr. Blanche. I can't talk about whether there was any
17 investigations.

18 Senator Booker. I'm not asking you about an ongoing
19 or closed investigation. I'm just asking you about this.
20 Are you --

21 Mr. Blanche. I can't answer your question "yes" or
22 "no."

23 Senator Booker. Did you or anyone else from the DOJ
24 or associated with the President discuss a presidential
25 pardon with Ghislaine Maxwell or her attorneys?

1 Mr. Blanche. No.

2 Senator Booker. Did you discuss clemency? Yes or no.

3 Mr. Blanche. No.

4 Senator Booker. Did you discuss --

5 Mr. Blanche. She was convicted. What do you mean

6 clemency?

7 Senator Booker. Did you discuss her transfer to

8 another institution? Yes or no.

9 Mr. Blanche. No.

10 Senator Booker. Well, just one week after your

11 meeting, Ms. Maxwell was transferred from a low-security

12 Federal institution to a minimum-security prison camp.

13 Were you involved with that transfer?

14 Mr. Blanche. As I've talked about before, in the time

15 leading up to me going down to meet with her, we learned

16 that she was receiving threats. It turned out when we

17 were there --

18 Senator Booker. I'm going to interrupt you for a

19 matter of time because --

20 Mr. Blanche. Okay. Well, it's not a question I can

21 answer apparently in the time you're giving me.

22 Senator Booker. Sir, I'm going to tell you this

23 because I deal with issues of criminal justice. When

24 people are under threats in a Bureau of Prison facility,

25 they're put into solitary confinement or protective.

1 They're not moved to a camp.

2 Mr. Blanche. That's not always true.

3 Senator Booker. It is.

4 Mr. Blanche. You're just wrong.

5 Senator Booker. What is true is someone that is
6 accused of child sex trafficking under the Bureau of
7 Prison's own policies is not put in a facility like this
8 that seems clearly like a reward.

9 The Department of Justice is also responsible that
10 powerful corporations play by the same rules. Let's take
11 the proposed merger between Paramount-Warner Brothers, and
12 Discovery. This is no ordinary transaction. It was a
13 proposed \$111 billion merger involving two of the last
14 remaining legacy Hollywood studios. As Deputy Attorney
15 General and later Acting Attorney General, you exercised
16 oversight of the Antitrust Division. Did you approve the
17 decision to close the Department's investigation into that
18 merger? Yes or no.

19 Mr. Blanche. I was part of the decision. I don't
20 know whether --

21 Senator Booker. Yes, you were involved in that.

22 Mr. Blanche. You don't let me answer, man. That's
23 incredible.

24 Senator Booker. Did the career attorneys --

25 Mr. Blanche. So, the answer to --

1 Senator Booker. -- who investigated that deal
2 recommend closing that investigation?

3 Mr. Blanche. I didn't have a conversation with the
4 career, but as I was saying earlier, I was --

5 Senator Booker. I didn't ask you that. I asked you,
6 did the career attorneys who investigated the deal
7 recommend closing the investigation?

8 Mr. Blanche. I have no idea what they were --

9 Senator Booker. You were in charge of that
10 Department, yet you have no idea. Well, this is --

11 Mr. Blanche. I didn't say I had no idea. I had no
12 idea about the question you asked about what the career
13 attorney's view was.

14 Senator Booker. You do not know what the career
15 attorney's view was.

16 Mr. Blanche. I'm not sure what the view was with
17 respect to closing it or not closing it.

18 Senator Booker. Well, let me tell you why ethics laws
19 that bind you about the appearance of impropriety are so,
20 so damning in this case. On the same day that Paramount
21 shareholders voted to approve the merger, David Ellison,
22 the head of the acquiring company, hosted a dinner that you
23 attended honoring the President of the United States.

24 While you were at that dinner, the DOJ was still
25 investigating a merger. Did you speak with Mr. Ellison on

1 that evening?

2 Mr. Blanche. No.

3 Senator Booker. Did you discuss with anyone involved
4 in that organization that evening the Department's ongoing
5 investigations?

6 Mr. Blanche. No.

7 Senator Booker. Well, 6 weeks later after that
8 dinner, that investigation was closed that you're stating
9 you have no idea if the attorneys in charge even finished
10 their investigation.

11 Mr. Blanche. That's not what I said.

12 Senator Booker. What did you say?

13 Mr. Blanche. You asked me a question about whether
14 the attorneys recommended that the investigation be closed,
15 and I said I wasn't sure. That's different than what you
16 just threw back at me.

17 Senator Booker. Well, do you believe that that
18 creates an appearance of impropriety that you were at a
19 dinner?

20 Mr. Blanche. No.

21 Senator Booker. Okay. The Justice Department ethics
22 rules are very clear about avoiding the appearance of
23 impropriety. In a case like this, I don't think that's
24 appearance of impropriety. I think that's improper, that
25 the connected and the powerful are getting a chance to rub

1 shoulders. It would seem appropriate that you avoid those
2 kind of appearances and dinners like that.

3 Mr. Blanche. Every appearance or dinner or speech
4 that I give are cleared by ethics officials.

5 Senator Booker. So, your attendance at that dinner
6 was cleared by ethics officials?

7 Mr. Blanche. Everything that I do, that I do outside
8 --

9 [Cross-talking.]

10 Senator Booker. I didn't ask you everything you do.
11 Was your appearance at that dinner cleared?

12 Mr. Blanche. You can ask the questions, but you
13 cannot control my answers. I'm under oath, and I can
14 answer the questions. I choose to answer them, okay?

15 Senator Booker. Were you approved --

16 Senator Booker. So, what I will tell you is what I do
17 things outside --

18 Senator Booker. Yes or no, were you approved by
19 ethics --

20 Mr. Blanche. When I do things outside of the
21 Department, whether it's a speech, whether it's a dinner,
22 whether it's an event, they are approved by ethics
23 officials.

24 Senator Booker. You did not answer whether that
25 attendance was approved.

1 Mr. Blanche. Every time I go out, it's approved, yes.

2 Senator Booker. You know, Lincoln, it was said about

3 him that if you want to see the true character of a man,

4 don't view him in adversity. Give him power. I believe

5 you've had a lot of power, and so we don't have to

6 speculate about what has been revealed with your time in

7 that office. We don't need to worry about what kind of

8 Attorney General. You've already had that power. This

9 isn't a job interview like usually. You've sat before this

10 Committee before. You've made promises time and time again

11 before. You got the job actually to be the number two and

12 the acting director, so this isn't a confirmation hearing.

13 This is more of a performance review, and clearly, when it

14 comes to the treatment of Epstein victims, when it comes to

15 politically motivated prosecutions, when it comes from

16 avoiding appearance of impropriety with corporations, you

17 have failed.

18 You're asking this body for a promotion, and you've

19 spent today making a lot of promises, promises to follow

20 the law, promises to be independent, promises to serve the

21 American people and not the President, but we don't need

22 your promises. We have your record. We have watched you

23 exercise one of the greatest powers entrusted to any public

24 servant, and what have you shown us? One thousand two

25 hundred victims waiting for justice. What have you shown

1 us? There's two prosecutions. While the people involved,
2 the victims are waiting for action, one of the people
3 prosecuted gets the most cushy arrangement possible after
4 you visit with her. Again and again, you seem to be
5 favoring the interests of a President and the powerful.
6 You've chosen Trump over truth. You've chosen corporations
7 over the Constitution, and you've failed to meet the test.

8 I'll say this in closing. This is why your nomination
9 should fail. The Attorney General's client is not the
10 President. It's the American people. You've been
11 protecting one man for most of your career, for years and
12 years and years. He has demonstrated himself to put undue
13 pressure. This is why he was impeached. This is why he
14 was criminally indicted. If your record and your testimony
15 today should show us anything, it should show you, in my
16 opinion, that you should not be confirmed to this job.

17 Senator Lee. Thank you, Senator Booker. Before I
18 commence with my questions, I've been asked by Chairman
19 Grassley to enter something into the record.

20 On behalf of Senator Grassley, I'd like to enter into
21 the record a letter supporting Mr. Blanche's nomination.
22 This is from the Newark Police Superior Officers
23 Association, which represents the leaders of the Newark,
24 New Jersey Police Department. The letter touts Mr.
25 Blanche's experience, character, temperament, and

1 leadership.

2 It goes on to state, "Mr. Blanche has consistently
3 demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the rule of law,
4 the fair administration of justice, and the constitutional
5 rights afforded to every citizen, including the due process
6 rights of law enforcement officers. Throughout his
7 distinguished legal career, he has earned a reputation for
8 integrity, professionalism, sound judgment, and respect for
9 the rule of law. These qualities are essential for the
10 Nation's chief law enforcement officer."

11 Without objection, I will enter this into the record.

12 [The letter appears in the appendix:]

13 / COMMITTEE INSERT

14 Senator Lee. Mr. Blanche, at the outset, earlier you
15 were asked by one of my colleagues about the settlement
16 agreement and about the definition of some of the terms.
17 Now, as I've been going through that, it seems to me that
18 some of those terms were defined earlier in the agreement,
19 albeit not in the section of the agreement that you were
20 shown on the board. Is that correct?

21 Mr. Blanche. Yes, Senator.

22 Senator Lee. And those make a difference, do they
23 not, to the nature of the question asked to you?

24 Mr. Blanche. Yes, of course. Yes.

25 Senator Lee. You have no reason to believe that the

1 so-called weaponization fund will continue because of the
2 settlement agreement. Is that correct?

3 Mr. Blanche. I am confident it will not.

4 Senator Lee. Great. During the previous
5 Administration, we saw an unprecedented and unfortunate
6 weaponization of the U.S. Department of Justice, an
7 institution near and dear to my heart, as I know it is to
8 yours, and an institution that's got a long and storied
9 reputation for impartiality. Public trust in law
10 enforcement plummeted as a result. That should concern
11 every member of this Committee and, indeed, every American.

12 The Arctic Frost investigation swept up more than 400
13 Republican-aligned groups and individuals with blanket
14 investigations, fishing expeditions in some instances,
15 designed to intimidate and silence conservative voices or
16 anyone deemed not favorable to President Biden and those
17 who served with him. Investigators even violated the
18 sanctity of Congress in a brazen move that tramples on all
19 sorts of protections, including the fundamental separation
20 of powers.

21 As Chairman Grassley's investigation continues, just
22 yesterday, we learned that Jack Smith's team bypassed a
23 required filter review and directly accessed the texts --
24 not metadata, not information about who texted who and what
25 time they did so -- but the actual content, the substantive

1 content of texts of 44 members of Congress, six of them on
2 the Senate Judiciary Committee, all without notice in a
3 baseless fishing expedition. This was un-American, and it
4 comes uncomfortably close to spying on a co-equal,
5 coordinate branch of the U.S. Government.

6 As you know, protecting individual liberty and our
7 constitutional rights is a top priority of mine. I
8 appreciated your testimony in May before the CJS
9 Appropriation Subcommittee in which you called the secret
10 collection of phone records from a dozen members of
11 Congress "the worst form of abuse." I sponsored the
12 bipartisan NDO legislation long before Arctic Frost, and I
13 believe this must be fixed no matter who holds the
14 presidency, in a way that protects all Americans. In fact,
15 this calls upon us, this underscores the need to pass that
16 NDO reform measure.

17 What steps have you already taken in your capacity as
18 Deputy Attorney General and now Acting Attorney General,
19 and what reforms do you plan in the future to end these
20 practices and this trend of weaponization within the
21 Department?

22 Mr. Blanche. Thank you, Senator. Well, there's a
23 number of things we're doing. Most significantly, it's
24 getting materials together and being transparent with this
25 body and this Committee like we did recently with the

1 emails that you just referenced, because one of the best
2 ways that we can make sure we never do again what we did
3 before is by exposing ourselves and letting the American
4 people see what we did. We're also taking steps to right
5 the wrongs, so that means, again, going back and issuing
6 reports and issuing findings and conclusions around not
7 only what the Department of Justice did at times, but other
8 agencies within the executive, and holding ourselves to
9 account that we shouldn't do it again.

10 And the most important thing, and it's come up a lot
11 today, but it is just having prosecutors prosecute bad
12 guys. And so, it's getting prosecutors out of D.C. and
13 into U.S. attorney's offices, and unleashing them to do
14 what they should be doing and what they should have been
15 doing for the past 4 years as well, which is tackling the
16 drug pandemic and epidemic we have in this country, going
17 after the fraudsters. And that's the best way to make sure
18 that the next Department of Justice continues doing the
19 right thing and not the wrong thing.

20 Senator Lee. That's wonderful to me. Sometimes when
21 you're doing the things that are not supposed to be done,
22 you're not doing the things that are supposed to be done.
23 I appreciate your efforts in that regard.

24 On another topic, Federal law prohibits non-citizens
25 from voting in Federal elections. Separately, a law called

1 the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, sometimes
2 known as the NVRA, requires, among other things, that the
3 States keep their voter registration files clean, removing
4 voters who have died, who have become ineligible, and to
5 make those maintenance records available for public
6 inspection. The Department of Justice has relied on that
7 disclosure requirement to request State voter rolls and to
8 confirm compliance with this mandate in the NVRA among the
9 States. But a number of States have refused, and when the
10 Department of Justice has sued in order to correct this
11 problem, some Federal courts have issued rulings indicating
12 that the NVRA doesn't clearly authorize doesn't clearly
13 authorize this kind of compelled production of the complete
14 voter registration files. So, the Department is thus left
15 without a reliable, viable enforcement tool, even where
16 noncompliance might be staring us in the face as it is in
17 some jurisdictions.

18 Put simply, non-citizens can't legally vote, but a
19 number of these States, blue States more than others, are
20 doing everything they can to prevent the Department of
21 Justice from enforcing the law. In the meantime, we've got
22 an interpretation of other provisions of the NVRA that have
23 made it, in tandem with this other problem, virtually
24 impossible to enforce the law prohibiting non-citizen
25 voting in Federal elections. In your view, would the SAVE

1 America Act give the Department of Justice clear authority
2 in its efforts to protect the sanctity and security of
3 those elections?

4 Mr. Blanche. Yes, absolutely. Yes.

5 Senator Lee. Thank you. I appreciate that very much.
6 This is a very important issue.

7 Now, under your leadership, the Department of Justice
8 fraud enforcement has seen some real success. You've got a
9 lot of success stories under your belt already. Can you
10 describe how you're leading that effort in the Department
11 to combat citizen fraud, healthcare fraud, and fraud in
12 taxpayer-funded programs and organizations?

13 Mr. Blanche. Yes. We're making it a high priority.
14 We're working with the White House and the Anti-Fraud Task
15 Force and, again, having prosecutors focus on fraud, and
16 so, that means working with inspectors general. That means
17 working with the FBI, DHS to get these cases, take them to
18 prosecutors. The Fraud Division itself is being built up.
19 We've already had tremendous success just in the past 4
20 weeks in recovering billions of dollars that had been
21 stolen from the fisc, and this is work that is just
22 starting. We've always done fraud cases. This isn't a new
23 thing for the Department of Justice to do, but the focus on
24 these fraud cases and the focus on every U.S. attorney
25 having multiple prosecutors focused on going after fraud

1 cases is something new, and it's something that is
2 important to President Trump. And it should be important
3 to everybody. Not a Republican or Democrat issue at all,
4 and that's why we're doing it.

5 Senator Lee. Shifting gears a little, tell us just
6 very briefly about what the Department's doing under your
7 leadership to protect children from predators.

8 Mr. Blanche. Listen, there is no greater
9 responsibility prosecutors have than protecting our most
10 vulnerable. I have a leader -- she's here today -- running
11 our task forces, going after any sort of human trafficking
12 or child predators in those cases, making sure we're
13 coordinated. We are, again, focusing AUSAs on going after
14 these cases. We've seen multiple investigations leading to
15 prosecutions and even multiple sentences at this point,
16 starting since we first took office over a year ago, and,
17 again, this is about spending resources where they should
18 be spent. So, instead of spending time in D.C. working on
19 cases that we really have no business working on, we are
20 out in the field protecting our victims, protecting
21 children, and going after the predators that are in every
22 community, and putting them in Federal prison.

23 Senator Lee. I'd like to turn now briefly to Section
24 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, FISA 702,
25 and I want to address some of the repeated claims made by

1 some of my colleagues that our intelligence collection
2 under 702 would go dark when the statute lapsed as of
3 midnight on June 12. As you know, Section 702 operates
4 under year-long certifications approved annually by the
5 FISA Court. Is that correct?

6 Mr. Blanche. Yes, that's correct.

7 Senator Lee. And the government most recently
8 obtained approval of its 702 certifications in March of
9 this year. Is that correct?

10 Mr. Blanche. It did, yes.

11 Senator Lee. So, those certifications remain valid
12 until they expire, right?

13 Mr. Blanche. Correct.

14 Senator Lee. And they don't expire until midnight on
15 March 16 of 2027. Is that correct?

16 Mr. Blanche. That is correct.

17 Senator Lee. Okay. So, in the event that the
18 telecommunications providers don't comply, that FISA Court
19 can and would compel compliance and impose fines. Isn't
20 that right?

21 Mr. Blanche. We would certainly try, yes.

22 Senator Lee. Thank you. I want to echo briefly what
23 my colleague, Senator Coons, has commented with regard to
24 the Safer Supervision Act to ensure that supervised release
25 is focused on those who need it, promoting both efficiency

1 and public safety, so thanks for your comments on that. I
2 really appreciated those. And then also, you know, some of
3 my colleagues have mentioned a recent court order in the
4 case regarding the leak of President Trump's tax returns
5 and the ensuing settlement. Responding to that opinion,
6 was there any improper coordination of any kind between the
7 Department of Justice and the Trump team as to this
8 settlement?

9 Mr. Blanche. No, not at all.

10 Senator Lee. Okay. So in fact, the case itself was
11 settled based on an apology without any compensation being
12 awarded, without the President receiving a penny. Isn't
13 that right?

14 Mr. Blanche. Correct, and completely consistent with
15 the Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41, which absolutely
16 allows what happened here to happen. It happens in
17 hundreds, if not thousands of cases around the country
18 every year.

19 Senator Lee. For any entity, whether it's the U.S.
20 Government or otherwise, that's been sued for \$10 billion
21 or any significant sum of money, that's seems like a pretty
22 darn good deal. I see my time's expired. I believe
23 Senator Padilla is up next.

24 Senator Padilla. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr.
25 Blanche, welcome. Do you believe every human life is

1 sacred?

2 Mr. Blanche. Can you repeat that, Senator? Sorry.

3 Senator Padilla. Do you believe that every human life
4 is sacred?

5 Mr. Blanche. Yes.

6 Senator Padilla. So do I. A lot of my colleagues
7 have made remarks about our colleague who recently passed.
8 This last week, we've also seen Lorenzo Salgado Araujo
9 fatally shot by an ICE agent during an enforcement
10 operation in Houston. Earlier this week, Joan Sebastian
11 Guerrero was killed in another fatal ICE-involved shooting
12 in Maine. I'm not here to debate immigration policy or how
13 immigration enforcement has been conducted by this
14 Administration. My questions are specific to law
15 enforcement policy and best practices. Given that these
16 are Federal officer-involved shootings, what role should
17 the Department of Justice play in ensuring independent and
18 transparent review and investigations over these incidents?

19 Mr. Blanche. It depends on the agency that the law
20 enforcement officer was a member of. So, if it's a FBI
21 agent as opposed to an ICE agent or an HSI agent, and the
22 role that we should play depends. It depends on the
23 conduct. Normally, each agency has their own procedures
24 for investigating any type of shooting, and it usually
25 involves their inspector general or an internal office. At

1 some point along the way, the DOJ --

2 Senator Padilla. I don't want to catch up too quickly
3 here.

4 Mr. Blanche. Sure.

5 Senator Padilla. I want to come back to that point --

6 Mr. Blanche. Sure.

7 Senator Padilla. -- but first ask, should State and
8 local law enforcement be involved in ensuring that there's
9 an independent investigation of these incidents?

10 Mr. Blanche. It depends. I think there's a lot of
11 times when State and locals should definitely be involved,
12 but I don't think unequivocally State and local have to be
13 involved for independence. Of course not.

14 Senator Padilla. Here's the bottom line why I'm
15 asking these two questions, because in prior incidents --
16 you referenced Minnesota earlier in your testimony -- Alex
17 Pretti and Renee Good were also fatally shot, and as far as
18 I can tell, it's been months and months. There's been no
19 justice in these cases. As far as I can tell, those
20 officers were not fired. They have not faced any charges.
21 So, it does undermine any confidence anybody should have in
22 the Department of Homeland Security's ability, through the
23 inspector general or otherwise, to investigate its own.
24 So, I come back to the question, what should the role of
25 the Department of Justice be when there's federally

1 officer-involved shootings?

2 Mr. Blanche. Well, I very much disagree with the
3 statement you just made. The mere passage of time between
4 January and today doesn't mean there's no justice. It
5 doesn't mean that. So, these investigations do take time,
6 and as Senator Klobuchar talked about, and it's her State,
7 we are -- we, meaning the Federal Government -- have worked
8 with the State and locals in that case.

9 Senator Padilla. I do want to move on to other
10 issues, but here's what I see: no justice, clear justice.
11 And I get investigations take time, but no justice in those
12 two cases. What we have seen is people continuing to die,
13 not just in detention facilities, but on the streets of
14 America.

15 Next topic. Coming back to January 6, there've been
16 several of my colleagues who've asked about the "slush
17 fund." Do you personally believe that someone who forcibly
18 entered the U.S. Capitol and assaulted law enforcement
19 should be rewarded with taxpayer money? Yes or no.

20 Mr. Blanche. I can't answer it "yes" or "no," but if
21 you want the answer, I think that the fund that doesn't
22 exist anymore set up parameters where, no, somebody that
23 you just described would likely not recover funds.

24 Senator Padilla. Which brings me to my other point,
25 because several members have asked, and I know Senator

1 Tillis specifically focused on the weaponization slush fund
2 and language versus declarations versus appropriations
3 bills on how to undo this. I also need to be clear that
4 January 6'ers cannot, should not be able to seek payouts
5 from other sources, including the Federal Tort Claims Act.
6 Do you commit to vigorously defending taxpayer money from
7 being paid out to January 6 rioters, those who were
8 convicted of their involvement with January 6, regardless
9 of the source of funding from the Department of Justice?

10 Mr. Blanche. You're talking about a statute that
11 exists, and it allows anybody to file a suit against the
12 United States. So, I can tell you we always vigorously
13 defend our cases, but I can't speak to a particular case of
14 filing the statute.

15 Senator Padilla. We know this is a hypothetical.
16 There's been at least four letters that I've signed on to,
17 along with Senators Durbin, Klobuchar, and Whitehouse, who
18 asked earlier about the status of January 6 rioters seeking
19 payouts from the Department. When can we expect responses
20 to those letters?

21 Mr. Blanche. When you say "status," do you mean those
22 that have filed cases in court? I don't know what that
23 means.

24 Senator Padilla. Yeah, status of their request for
25 payouts being reviewed, approved, or not.

1 Mr. Blanche. I think anybody, including January 6
2 defendants, can file a claim under the Federal Torts Claims
3 Act, and I think some of them have. Those cases are
4 ongoing. They're publicly available on ECF.

5 Senator Padilla. And I know some people would
6 suggest, well, they've all been pardoned for their crimes
7 on January 6, and so this may be fair game. Are you aware
8 that at least 97 January 6'ers rioters have been accused of
9 new crimes since January 6, 2021, including violent crimes,
10 by the way, child molestation, et cetera? That sounds like
11 the worst of the worst to me.

12 Mr. Blanche. If anybody commits a crime, they should
13 be investigated, arrested, and prosecuted. So, if you're
14 talking about people that committed Federal crimes and they
15 happen to have been pardoned before, they should be
16 arrested and prosecuted, yes.

17 Senator Padilla. I look forward to that as well, and
18 we'll follow up in questions for the record.

19 Mr. Blanche, during our courtesy meeting a few weeks
20 ago, you said that, "Independence of the Department was a
21 misnomer in the context of the Department of Justice
22 because the President sets policies and priorities," and in
23 your view, "The Department of Justice must enforce the law
24 in a way that carries out the President's goals." Do you
25 recall that conversation?

1 Mr. Blanche. Yeah, I definitely did not say that, but
2 nice try.

3 Senator Padilla. No, that's exactly what I recall
4 from our conversation, so I want to be on the record saying
5 I --

6 Mr. Blanche. Well, I'm happy to tell you what I said
7 to help your recollection.

8 Senator Padilla. So, the Department of Justice should
9 be independent or not?

10 Mr. Blanche. I think as I said earlier, the
11 Department of Justice is under the executive branch. If
12 confirmed, I will be a member of the President's Cabinet.
13 So, absolutely my obligation is the American people and the
14 rule of law.

15 [Cross-talking.]

16 Mr. Blanche. With that being said, I am a member of
17 the Cabinet of the President of the United States.

18 Senator Padilla. We'll talk about the if confirmed in
19 a minute, but let me also point out the Department of
20 Justice's own website states right on the homepage that the
21 Department's core missions is independence and
22 impartiality, so let me bring a specific example.

23 Last fall, President Trump issued a statement for
24 National Domestic Violence Awareness Month where he said,
25 "I'm steadfastly devoted to uplifting survivors of domestic

1 violence and ensuring they know they are never alone, and
2 that help and support are always within reach." Sounds
3 like a statement that we'd all agree with, but the Office
4 of Violence Against Women is a vital component of the
5 Department of Justice that administers grants to
6 organizations that provide services for victims of domestic
7 violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking.
8 It provides critical resources to organizations that
9 support victims. Yes or no, are you aware that the office
10 is substantially delayed in notifying grant recipients of
11 awards that were intended to begin October 1 of last year?

12 Mr. Blanche. We are rolling grants out on a rolling
13 basis, and we continue to do so. We will continue to do
14 so. We didn't have the grants authorized until January of
15 this year, so --

16 Senator Padilla. And it's now July. It's been 6
17 months. Next "yes" or "no" question: are you aware that
18 as a result of the delays, many organizations have been
19 forced to lay off staff and reduce services for domestic
20 violence victims? Yes or no.

21 Mr. Blanche. I am not aware of that, no.

22 Senator Padilla. Okay. I'm happy to provide you
23 information and cases. Are you aware that many notices of
24 funding opportunities for the fiscal year 2026 have yet to
25 be posted for grants that are supposed to begin on October

1 1 of this year?

2 Mr. Blanche. I know that we are posting, that we are
3 caught up from the last fiscal year. The budget wasn't
4 approved until January of this year. We had to finish last
5 year's first. We're putting them out every single day.

6 Senator Padilla. Again, it's been 6 months. Are you
7 aware that multiple congressional offices from both sides
8 of the aisle -- this is not partisan -- on a bipartisan
9 basis have reached out to the office about delays and have
10 not been given any concrete timeline, despite the real and
11 substantial impact that these delays are having on domestic
12 violence services?

13 Mr. Blanche. That's not true. I've testified
14 publicly about it on multiple occasions, and we have given
15 a timeline. I just gave you the timeline today, which is
16 that we're doing it every day on a rolling basis. We're
17 caught up to last year's, and we're moving forward --

18 Senator Padilla. I'd like to see a specific schedule
19 so that organizations in California --

20 Mr. Blanche. -- and we anticipate having all of them
21 done by the end of this fiscal year.

22 Senator Padilla. -- and every other State for that
23 matter can know when to expect their funding. I know my
24 time is running out. Let me just end with this.

25 Mr. Blanche, it's the duty of the Attorney General of

1 the United States to "operate free from partisan
2 consideration and protect citizens' rights to equal
3 justice," but what I've heard today fails to inspire much
4 confidence in your ability to carry out that duty or to put
5 Federal law before loyalty to the President. I add to that
6 facts from the judiciary. District courts in 31 cases have
7 recognized that the Administration has violated court
8 rulings that the Attorney General refuses to rule out,
9 refusing to abide by the circuit court rulings that they
10 disagree with. In immigration cases alone, the
11 Administration has admitted violating court orders in the
12 District of New Jersey alone more than 50 times. This does
13 not sound like a Department of Justice.

14 The American people deserve better, and a lot of
15 nominees come before us and say, well, if I'm fortunate
16 enough to be confirmed, then this or that. I'm not buying
17 that. I know you're not confirmed for the top spot.
18 You're acting in the top spot. You were the number two
19 from nearly the beginning of the term. Yes, a lot of this
20 accountability falls on your shoulders. The American
21 people deserve an Attorney General who put the Constitution
22 above political retribution. I don't think you're fit for
23 this job. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

24 Senator Lee. We'll go next to Senator Moody. Before
25 we do that, I've been asked by Senator Grassley, the

1 chairman, to enter into the record a letter supporting Mr.
2 Blanche's nomination from the United Coalition of Public
3 Safety, which represents many of the Nation's largest law
4 enforcement organizations and tens of thousands of law
5 enforcement officers across the country. The letter
6 highlights both Mr. Blanche's qualifications to serve as
7 Attorney General and his unique approach to the criminal
8 justice system. It states, "We believe Mr. Blanche will
9 serve with honor, fairness and a steadfast commitment to
10 the rule of law. His leadership will undoubtedly enhance
11 collaboration between law enforcement and the Department of
12 Justice, ensuring that our communities remain safe while
13 reinforcing public confidence in our own system."

14 Without objection, this letter will be admitted into
15 the record.

16 [The letter appears in the appendix:]

17 / COMMITTEE INSERT

18 Senator Lee. And Senator Moody, you're recognized.

19 Senator Moody. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good to see
20 you again and get to talk with you about your nomination,
21 Mr. Blanche. And everything that I warned about in my
22 introduction seems to be proving true, that good faith and
23 nuance is just going to be thrown out the door as a price
24 to be paid for clicks and tweets and promotion of some
25 partisan agenda today because I'm going to quote from one

1 of my colleagues. They said to you, "Protecting one man
2 for most of your career." Would you define your career as
3 protecting one man, Mr. Blanche, and if not, why not?

4 Mr. Blanche. I mean, absolutely not. I mean, I am a
5 prosecutor. I'm a career prosecutor. I started out as an
6 intern down the street at the Department of Justice. I was
7 a paralegal. I was a law clerk. When I was representing
8 President Trump, I had other clients as well. So, the fact
9 that I represented President Trump for a period of time,
10 under 2 years, does not define my career, nor does it
11 define me. I should be defined by the work that I did as a
12 prosecutor and by the work that I've done leading this
13 Department since March of last year.

14 Senator Moody. I think one of the true crises that we
15 face as a Nation right now, and you can pick the subject
16 matter which this would apply, but the American people, who
17 are supposed to be where the power lies in this country.
18 It was how our government was set up. It was a government
19 to serve them, first and foremost, to protect their rights.
20 And as part of that, even our founding fathers said, in
21 order to do that, you have to have a government that
22 effectuates safety. And so, I truly believe that your
23 Agency is one of the most important in our government
24 structure for those reasons, because you have the
25 responsibility of all of that.

1 The most serious challenge I see facing our Nation
2 right now is that the people don't trust that Washington is
3 indeed working for them, or being accountable to them, or
4 serving their interests first. And I just came from a
5 hearing where you had Nick Shirley, James O'Keefe, really a
6 partisan swath of witnesses testifying about fraud in this
7 country, and I think, you know, this Administration is
8 making announcement after announcement, you yourself are
9 making announcement after announcement, the extent of fraud
10 that has been uncovered. And I commended Nick Shirley, and
11 he described himself as an independent journalist, but he
12 started out disrupting, you know, young at, like, 15
13 weddings, I want to say. And I think that spirit of
14 challenging the status quo or formality has really driven
15 him to disrupt what I think the American people believe is
16 a bureaucracy, historically, that has not only maybe
17 because of its size, maybe because personnel and they
18 aren't too quick to want to uncover, but has really been
19 not inclined, complacent, or is set up to not uncover and
20 really go after some of this fraud.

21 And I've been astounded by the amount that this
22 Administration has uncovered, and I commend people like
23 Nick Shirley and James O'Keefe that have been out there
24 because they're American citizens, and they believe that
25 their government owes them accountability and stewardship

1 of taxpayer money first and foremost. And he said, "I
2 can't believe that for so long, nobody paid attention to
3 this, and we're seeing just fraud that is just something
4 that we haven't imagined."

5 And I'm really proud of this Administration and the
6 DOJ, specifically under your leadership, for setting up a
7 specific division now to go after these things that are
8 raised, and the results speak for themselves. I mean,
9 you've established a new National Fraud Enforcement
10 Division, charged with bringing a comprehensive approach to
11 rooting out fraud. We just saw a 2026 national healthcare
12 fraud takedown where you charged 455 defendants in
13 connection with schemes involving more than \$6.5 billion in
14 fraud. I believe we brought together the most States and
15 territories ever in the history of the Department's
16 existence in going after fraud. That was all under your
17 leadership and this Administration, and I think that
18 delivers a remarkable message, not only to the people out
19 there committing this fraud against the American taxpayer
20 and really against the next generation that's going to
21 inherit this.

22 I mean, I'm a mother of a teenager right now. I feel
23 terrible that they're going to inherit all of this because
24 before Biden ever pushed out swaths of money that went to
25 corruption and fraud, an American taxpayer had to earn it

1 or we had to borrow it on the backs of our next generation.
2 And so, I am proud of the Department saying enough is
3 enough. The free ride is over. We are digging in. Not
4 only are we just going to, you know, talk about it. We're
5 going to actually show you what we're doing, and we're
6 going to create an entire different division. I think it
7 speaks volumes you have the new head of your fraud division
8 with you today in the audience. I think America should
9 know that that didn't exist before you.

10 I would like for you to tell the American people right
11 now a little bit about that because I have to tell you,
12 when some of these States learned about this fraud going
13 on, when Nick Shirley showed up and exposed some of this
14 insane fraud that was happening right under State
15 administration government's noses, the reaction from State
16 leadership, the Governor of Minnesota called Shirley a far-
17 right delusional conspiracy theorist, maybe because he
18 campaigned on these small businesses that were set up with
19 that money so that the American people like, "We are
20 growing small businesses, make me your Vice President."
21 Maybe that's why he had to knock Nick Shirley down a notch.
22 Governor Newsom came out and said, "Slow Shirley is the
23 fraud." He tried to ridicule and demean this 24-year-old
24 kid who's just uncovering fraud, and these are chief
25 executives of States.

1 So, I'd like for you to explain what you're doing
2 differently because, right now, I just came from a hearing
3 where not one Democrat was in the room to ask this
4 bipartisan witness panel about the fraud that's happening
5 or what we could do about it. Not one Democrat was in the
6 room, and we've got elected officials around the State,
7 when people are trying to bring it to their attention,
8 calling out the people bringing it to their attention, and
9 not only that, trying to pass legislation to stop them
10 uncovering it. In California, they have a Stop Nick
11 Shirley Act, which should be called the Protect Fraudsters
12 Act, I assume.

13 But tell us what you're doing different and how you're
14 going to work to uncover and root out and go against
15 criminals in these States where these elected officials are
16 complicit, maybe aiding and abetting because they're going
17 after the people that are trying to raise the issues.

18 Mr. Blanche. Yes. So, before we talk about
19 California and Minnesota, it's worth talking about States
20 that are working with us. So places like Florida, places
21 like Ohio, where we're working closely with the local
22 government, getting information about individuals who are
23 committing fraud, applying for money from the Federal
24 Governments where the State serves as a passthrough. and
25 what President Trump and the Vice President did last fall

1 was said enough is enough. We need an all-out government
2 approach to combat fraud.

3 And so, part of that is our new Fraud Division, and
4 the work that they're doing is exactly what you just
5 described. and some of the stuff that Nick Shirley has
6 uncovered has been incredible, but it's going into these
7 States and identifying at this point, just low-hanging
8 fruit, so fraudsters that have set up daycare centers that
9 have set up autism centers and --

10 Senator Moody. Learning centers.

11 Mr. Blanche. Learning centers.

12 Senator Moody. Hearing. Hearing.

13 Mr. Blanche. Hearing centers, everything, and there's
14 no patients. They're just collecting money off the backs
15 of taxpayers. It's true, the Governor of Minnesota did
16 nothing but obstruct our efforts month after month, and
17 then when we did a takedown and we executed a law
18 enforcement action on a given day, he hopped onto X and
19 said he was happy to partner with us. He's not partnering
20 with us, he's not working with us, and so that's very
21 disappointing. The same thing with the Governor of
22 California where the amount of fraud that's being stolen
23 out of the generosity of taxpayers around this country is
24 in the billions of dollars.

25 But listen, without talking about that, what we can

1 say that is extraordinarily positive is that we have
2 arrested hundreds and hundreds of fraudsters just this year
3 alone, and we've got a lot more to do between now and the
4 end of the year. And that's the work of, again, our
5 Federal agents, our inspector generals, DHS, HSI working
6 with us, FBI, and then our prosecutors who now have been
7 given full authority and have been unleashed to tackle this
8 problem. There is no fraud too small. Colin McDonald says
9 it, and it's right: if you commit \$1,001 of fraud, you
10 should expect to go to Federal prison. And we're going
11 after the biggest fraudsters and the smallest fraudsters
12 because any dollar that's taken inappropriately is
13 something that this Department of Justice won't tolerate.

14 So, it's a big effort and it's going to take a lot of
15 work. We're hiring a lot of prosecutors. We're using a
16 lot of AUSAs around the country, but I expect that we'll
17 continue to see the results that we're already seeing. So,
18 thank you very much for the work that you guys have done as
19 well to help facilitate our success there.

20 Senator Moody. Thank you, Mr. Blanche.

21 Chairman Grassley. [Presiding.] Senator Welch.

22 Senator Welch. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

23 Thank you very much, Deputy Attorney General.

24 I want to talk to you a little bit about the anti-
25 weaponization fund. Just by way of background, you've had

1 a longstanding relationship, of course, with President
2 Trump, served as his personal criminal attorney, right?

3 Mr. Blanche. I met him for the first time a couple
4 years ago.

5 Senator Welch. Right, and in the course of your
6 representation of the President, you earned over \$9
7 million, correct?

8 Mr. Blanche. My law firm was paid that much. I had
9 six or seven lawyers.

10 Senator Welch. Well, that was in your financial
11 disclosures. I don't have a problem --

12 Mr. Blanche. No, I did. I was paid it. Sorry.

13 Senator Welch. Right.

14 Mr. Blanche. But I'm saying it went to my law firm.
15 I had employees.

16 Senator Welch. Right. It's been raised that you have
17 a close relationship with the President, but you're
18 entitled to that, and the President is entitled to appoint
19 as Attorney General a person in whom he has some trust, so
20 that's not an issue for me. But on the anti-weaponization
21 fund, there is the question of whether a President who is
22 suing the taxpayers, the IRS, for \$10 billion, and where
23 his formerly personal lawyer is representing the taxpayers,
24 is there a conflict of interest? And my understanding is
25 that before you actually got here, you did get ethics

1 training after you were acting Deputy Attorney General,
2 correct?

3 Mr. Blanche. Yes.

4 Senator Welch. And my understanding is that you were
5 advised that you should not be engaged in matters that
6 affected President Trump in his individual capacity. Is
7 that correct?

8 Mr. Blanche. No. I'm not sure what your
9 understanding's based upon, but no. There's very clear
10 ethics rules that I was required to follow that I do
11 follow.

12 Senator Welch. It's based on the letter from Mr.
13 Tirrell, and you've received normal ethics training.

14 Mr. Blanche. Yes.

15 Senator Welch. And normal ethics includes that you do
16 not represent someone with whom you have been representing
17 them before in a personal matter, right?

18 Mr. Blanche. I'm not trying to get uber technical,
19 but there are very technical rules around the ethics
20 requirements --

21 Senator Welch. Well, let me --

22 Mr. Blanche. -- and I follow them.

23 Senator Welch. All right. Well, maybe you could
24 provide us with what the ethical materials you can provide.

25 Mr. Blanche. I can tell you right now if you're

1 interested.

2 Senator Welch. What I'd like you to do is send us the
3 materials. Let me go on. If you had an issue, there was a
4 dispute involving, say, Paramount, would you have a lawyer
5 from the Justice Department who owned \$9 million in stock
6 negotiate on behalf of the government with that company?

7 Mr. Blanche. It depends. As long as there's an
8 ethical and there was no conflict in doing it --

9 [Cross-talking.]

10 Senator Welch. So, if I had \$9 million in stock with
11 Paramount, I'm representing the people, there's an
12 adversarial relationship, you'd let me negotiate on behalf
13 of the people when the outcome of those negotiations would
14 have an impact on my stock price?

15 Mr. Blanche. Sorry. I just want to understand your
16 hypo. If a lawyer for the Department of Justice has \$9
17 million in Paramount stock, they should not be on that
18 case.

19 Senator Welch. Right.

20 Mr. Blanche. I agree, yes.

21 Senator Welch. Okay, and, you know, what happened
22 here with the President that's so mystifying to many of us,
23 it would be analogous if the Governor of Vermont sued the
24 Department of Taxes for \$10 billion. We don't appoint
25 attorney generals, but in New Hampshire they do, but let's

1 say we did, and the governor's formerly personal
2 attorney --

3 Mr. Blanche. There's no comparison between --

4 Senator Welch. Let me finish my question. The
5 governor sues the Department of Taxes for \$10 billion. His
6 former personal attorney, who now he's appointed Attorney
7 General, negotiates with the Department of Taxes and ends
8 up settling by setting up a fund in the control,
9 essentially, of the governor for \$1.77 billion, that
10 doesn't sound fishy to you?

11 Mr. Blanche. Well, the hypo you just described, I
12 don't think it's appropriate to use the word "fishy." It's
13 either ethical or not ethical.

14 Senator Welch. Well, you know --

15 Mr. Blanche. And there's no --

16 Senator Welch. -- Vermonters would just say it
17 stinks. I mean, that is truly bizarre that the chief
18 executive gets his appointed person, who was formerly his
19 personal attorney, to negotiate on his behalf where, at the
20 end of the day, taxpayers are going to pay. So, I'll just
21 leave it at that.

22 Mr. Blanche. The other thing I'll correct, though, is
23 you use the word as if I negotiated. I wasn't part of the
24 negotiation which I've said before, so.

25 Senator Welch. Your Department is. You had to sign

1 off on it.

2 Mr. Blanche. Yes, that's true.

3 Senator Welch. That is your signature.

4 Mr. Blanche. Yes, that is my signature.

5 Senator Welch. I mean, look, you're at the top of the
6 pile here.

7 Mr. Blanche. Yes.

8 Senator Welch. So, you don't get involved in all the
9 phone calls and all the details, but at the end of the day,
10 you have to do due diligence and satisfy yourself that you
11 in good faith can sign off on the agreement.

12 Mr. Blanche. Correct.

13 Senator Welch. And you did.

14 Mr. Blanche. Yes.

15 Senator Welch. So, that is your responsibility, and
16 I'm sure you --

17 Mr. Blanche. Oh, I do have responsibility for it.

18 Senator Welch. That's right.

19 Mr. Blanche. I agree with that, yes.

20 Senator Welch. All right. You know, let's talk about
21 the pardons. I understand any President has total
22 authority to pardon anyone he or she wants, and that
23 includes commuting sentences, and it includes restoration
24 of gun rights. You know who Liz Oyer is?

25 Mr. Blanche. Yes.

1 Senator Welch. And you know who Mel Gibson is?

2 Mr. Blanche. Yes.

3 Senator Welch. All right. Mel Gibson was convicted
4 of domestic violence. What he did was he punched his then
5 girlfriend in the teeth, threatened her with a gun while
6 she had their infant in her arms. Now, it's the
7 President's decision. He can restore Mr. Gibson's gun
8 rights. That's not your decision. But my understanding is
9 you had a pardon attorney who, when requests were made to
10 restore gun rights to domestic abusers, they'd be vetted --
11 mental health issues, other issues -- and that's because of
12 a 500 percent increase in homicide rates of domestic
13 abusers who have guns. You asked or one of your people
14 asked Liz Oyer to provide a letter that basically said,
15 okay, we can restore his gun rights. Is that correct?

16 Mr. Blanche. That happened the day I was starting.

17 Senator Welch. It was 2days.

18 Mr. Blanche. I know Ms. Oyer has claimed that --

19 Senator Welch. It was two days after.

20 Mr. Blanche. I know that Ms. Oyer has claimed that
21 that had anything to do with her firing. I didn't even
22 know of that. I know nothing about Mel Gibson or that
23 letter when I fired her. Nothing.

24 Senator Welch. So, why did you fire her?

25 Mr. Blanche. For a number of reasons. For one,

1 her --

2 Senator Welch. For the two days?

3 Mr. Blanche. Yes, for a number of reasons. It had
4 nothing to do with Mel Gibson. The decisions that she made
5 as a pardon attorney in the weeks and months leading up to
6 the end of President Biden's term were completely
7 inconsistent with President Trump's authority, including
8 recommending commuting every single individual on death
9 row, which even President Biden didn't do, so.

10 Senator Welch. I'll let Americans be the jury of
11 whether that sounds right --

12 Mr. Blanche. It is right.

13 Senator Welch. -- but 2 days after you were there,
14 she got fired. She was told to do a letter that was
15 basically going to validate the decision the President had
16 made to restore gun rights to a man who smashed his
17 girlfriend's mouth, threatened her with a gun, and did it
18 with her holding their infant.

19 Mr. Blanche. It had nothing to do with why she was
20 fired, by the way. Nothing.

21 Senator Welch. What also is documented is that she
22 was going to testify here in Congress before a roundtable,
23 and people were dispatched, Federal marshals, to go to her
24 home at night. It turns out she was not there. Her 11-
25 year-old son was there alone, and fortunately, at the very

1 last minute, that access to her house or that the trip to
2 her house was canceled.

3 Mr. Blanche. That's not true. I mean, if you want me
4 to answer with the truth, I can.

5 Senator Welch. What part of it is not true?

6 Mr. Blanche. When we learned that she was going to
7 testify about privileged communications, like we do anytime
8 a former employee is going to violate their ethical duties,
9 we drafted a letter. We tried to serve that letter on her
10 via email. We tried to contact her. She would not answer
11 her phone. So, the way the Department of Justice serves
12 people in every case is with Deputy United States Marshals.
13 We endeavored to do that, and then she accepted service.

14 Senator Welch. Oh, thank you. I'll go on. Kash
15 Patel, I do want to go back to my colleague, Senator
16 Whitehouse's, concerns. I have concerns about him because
17 of the reports about his drinking, about the incredibly bad
18 morale there, but I'm not going to ask you on that. You
19 are his supervisor, so obviously you have some
20 responsibility to be reviewing this behavior, but --

21 Mr. Blanche. I don't think he has any issues
22 drinking. He has no issues with morale either.

23 Senator Welch. All right. Here's what is very clear.
24 He was at the White House for 8 hours, and this is after a
25 report came out in the New York Times that talked about the

1 \$400 million Qatari plane that was Air Force One not having
2 certain defensive capabilities, and issued subpoenas to
3 reporters demanding that they turn over their news sources.
4 I happen to believe it's extremely important to protect the
5 right of the press to have confidential sources in order to
6 get out information that is absolutely in the public
7 interest. Do you support Mr. Patel's efforts to subpoena
8 and get reporters under the grill to disclose who their
9 confidential sources are?

10 Mr. Blanche. The Department of Justice requires that
11 I authorize it, which I did, and those reporters, we're not
12 targeting reporters. They're material witnesses, just like
13 a reporter would be a material witness to a car crash.
14 They are witnesses, and so --

15 Senator Welch. And the question you want to ask them
16 is who were their sources.

17 Mr. Blanche. No. No.

18 Senator Welch. That goes to the heart of the First
19 Amendment.

20 Mr. Blanche. No. The question we want to ask them is
21 who provided them with classified national security
22 information which everybody in this body should want to
23 protect, I would hope.

24 Chairman Grassley. Senator Hawley.

25 Senator Hawley. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

1 Mr. Blanche, good to see you.

2 Mr. Blanche. You too, Senator.

3 Senator Hawley. You're getting towards the end here.

4 Are you still sure you want this job?

5 Mr. Blanche. I do, Senator.

6 Senator Hawley. Good. All right. Good, good. Well,
7 that was a rhetorical question, but I'm glad the answer is
8 yes.

9 I want to start with Jack Smith and the latest
10 revelations of his illegalities, which seem to have no end.
11 I mean, listen, I've had my text messages, did have my text
12 messages by him scooped up, read. Who knows what he did
13 with them. I've had my cellphone monitored. He tracked my
14 incoming calls, my outgoing calls. He tracked my metadata.
15 He tracked my location, I mean, Lord knows what else. The
16 part that really offends me, though, is that he didn't just
17 do it to me and members of Congress. He did it to ordinary
18 Americans. I've had Missourians come to me and say, I had
19 FBI agents show up at my door, knock on my door and say,
20 "Were you in Washington, D.C., in January of 2021?" These
21 are people who did nothing wrong. They weren't even here.
22 They come to me and they said, "What is going on? What am
23 I going to do? I can't afford an attorney."

24 What really gets me at the end of the day is he lies
25 about it. I mean, he has lied and lied about it, and I

1 want to just make good that claim. Here is a record -- I'm
2 going to read it to you -- a record of Jack Smith's
3 responses under oath now to members of Congress. He is
4 asked, Question: "As it relates to members and their
5 staffs and senators, it's just the toll records as far as
6 you remember." Smith: "That is my recollection."
7 Question: "Did the records that you requested include the
8 content of text messages?" Smith, Answer: "No." Now,
9 maybe there's some nuance I'm missing here, but it sounds a
10 lot to me like this guy didn't tell the truth. Have you
11 thought about investigating this guy for perjury?

12 Mr. Blanche. We take testimony in front of this body
13 very seriously, yes.

14 Senator Hawley. Good. Well, I think he absolutely
15 should be investigated. I think he absolutely should be
16 prosecuted, if at all possible, and based on his responses
17 under oath, I think he should be. And I think it's time
18 that we say that these people who did this, who engaged in
19 this mass illegality, blatant violation of the separation
20 of powers, blatant violation of the Constitution. We know
21 what they did to President Trump, we know what they did to
22 everyday, innocent Americans, and that's before we even
23 touched the issue of trying to recruit spies into Catholic
24 parishes, sending members of the Anti-Terrorism Division to
25 go hound parents who went to school board meetings.

1 It's unlike anything we've ever seen in American
2 history, and my view is there needs to be accountability
3 for it. I hope that you will investigate Jack Smith for
4 perjury, and I hope that possibly you'll prosecute him.

5 Mr. Blanche. Yes, Senator.

6 Senator Hawley. Let me switch gears and ask you about
7 a Missouri-specific issue. My State has a number of laws
8 that protect the unborn. We're a very pro-life State in
9 Missouri, and that includes laws that limit the use of the
10 chemical abortion drug, the circumstances under which it
11 can be prescribed. You need to see a physician and so
12 forth under Missouri law. Now, as you know, Joe Biden
13 gutted all of those restrictions. He took away President
14 Trump's safety restrictions on this chemical abortion drug.
15 He instituted a mail order abortion policy, so my State
16 went to court to try to defend our State's laws. A number
17 of other Republican States did this.

18 Now, of course, in the meantime, the President
19 changed, thank goodness, and now we have President Trump,
20 but that means that now we have the State of Missouri, a
21 Republican State, along with a number of other conservative
22 Republican States are in court against a Republican
23 Administration fighting over Joe Biden's abortion policy.
24 And by the way, while I'm on this subject, I just want to
25 show you why it matters to Missouri. Here's what happened

1 in Missouri after Joe Biden changed the rules and
2 contravened our State laws.

3 [Poster]

4 Senator Hawley. Look at the abortions. I mean,
5 dramatic increase, dramatic increase because under Joe
6 Biden's abortion rules, it doesn't matter what your State
7 law is. It doesn't matter what the voters in my State do.
8 You can just mail in this abortion drug, no prescription,
9 no follow-up visits for the mother, no medical support at
10 all. You mentioned this earlier I think. You can mail
11 these in from overseas, from India for heaven's sake, and
12 that's where many of them come from. Nationally, we see
13 the same thing since Biden put his policy in place:
14 massive increases, massive increases in the number of
15 abortions.

16 Here's what I want to get at with you. I just hate
17 this policy, first of all, but I hate it that we have these
18 Republican States in court against a Republican
19 Administration, and it just seems to me there's got to be
20 some solution to this. So, I just want to ask you, what do
21 you think that is? I mean, how do you think we can get to
22 some solution here from all of this mess and find our way
23 out of it? I turn it over to you.

24 Mr. Blanche. I share your concerns as does this
25 entire Administration. As you know, I mean, we have the

1 most pro-life President in history, and you are one of the
2 most pro-life senators in this body, and so that is a good
3 thing. I don't want to talk about litigation strategy
4 here, it's not appropriate, but I will say, as we said in
5 our briefing, we are not defending what Biden did and will
6 not. The FDA has a process that we're letting them go
7 forward in, and this is, again, in our briefings. It takes
8 a year. They've committed to do it significantly less time
9 than a year. We'll always, and when I say "we," I'm not
10 just saying the Department of Justice. I'm saying
11 President Trump's Administration in its entirety will
12 protect the life of the unborn and work with States and
13 obviously you to make sure that we do that in the best way.
14 I want to get to a solution as well. I don't want to talk
15 about litigation strategy here. I don't think that's the
16 right forum, but I very much share your concerns, Senator.

17 Senator Hawley. You mentioned just a second ago, I
18 think this is an important point. I just want to make sure
19 I drive this home. This abortion policy, Biden's abortion
20 policy, which changed President Trump's own rule, you're
21 not defending that in court, right? I mean, you're not
22 defending that on the merit.

23 Mr. Blanche. And it's in all of our pleadings that we
24 are not, correct.

25 Senator Hawley. Yeah, and, you know, even the FDA

1 Commissioner said -- I'm just going to quote him here --
2 that "Biden's rules, as a legal matter, lacked adequate
3 consideration." The HHS Secretary, Bobby Kennedy, said
4 that "Biden's rules invite potential dangers by offering
5 the mifepristone without sufficient medical support or
6 supervision." So, those are from your filings, so I want
7 to be clear on this. You do not defend this policy on the
8 merits whatsoever.

9 Mr. Blanche. Correct.

10 Senator Hawley. And presumably, you have no issue
11 with President Trump's earlier rule, which had commonsense
12 safety restrictions. You had to see a doctor, get a
13 prescription. There had to be a follow-up visit to see if
14 there was any hemorrhaging. Those were in place before
15 Biden gutted them. Presumably, there's no issue with any
16 of those.

17 Mr. Blanche. I anticipate the Department would defend
18 those rules, yes.

19 Senator Hawley. Okay. That leads me to this
20 question. While the FDA's doing its review, why not put
21 President Trump's rules in place? They're good rules. Why
22 not do that rather than leave in place these rules? I
23 mean, just explain that to me.

24 Mr. Blanche. Well, this gets to my original point
25 when I don't think it's appropriate to talk about our

1 litigation strategy here, except to say that we want to get
2 to a good result consistent with President Trump's
3 administrative directive and priorities, and we very much
4 believe that the Biden rules were wrong. So, we're
5 continuing.

6 Senator Hawley. Good. I'm glad to hear that. Do you
7 have any thought about what a solution, a good result might
8 be? And I'm not asking you to discuss your litigation. I
9 mean, apart from that, I mean, how are we going to get out
10 of the litigation? I want to be clear, I want to get out
11 of the litigation. I hate the fact that, again, all these
12 Republican States are litigating against a Republican
13 Administration. We got to find some way to end that, so
14 maybe you have a thought. Go ahead.

15 Mr. Blanche. I hope that the work the FDA is doing
16 now, because, remember, we have to have studies that we can
17 defend in court. We have to be able to say to a judge,
18 probably in this district, that our change was not
19 arbitrary and capricious. So, we're trying to let FDA --
20 "we" meaning the Department of Justice -- do their work so
21 that we can continue to protect the lives of the unborn
22 children and, frankly, the State's laws like Missouri's,
23 which is really what's being violated here at its core.

24 Senator Hawley. Let me just ask you one other thing
25 on this. I know that you've seen these stories, these news

1 reports about women who are assaulted by their boyfriends
2 or whomever. They get pregnant. The boyfriend doesn't
3 want it, you know. They take the drug, crush it up, lace
4 it in their drink or what have you. You know, one example,
5 Rosalie Markovich. You know, Rosalie, she got pregnant.
6 She was excited. She did not want to have an abortion.
7 She wanted to have her baby. Her boyfriend did not want
8 that, so without telling her, certainly without her
9 consent, he laced the drug into her drink. It caused her
10 to begin to miscarry. He restrained her so she couldn't go
11 to the hospital. I mean, you know, this is assault.
12 Multiple States now have brought dozens of criminal charges
13 against men who do this.

14 My question to you is, have you thought about devoting
15 resources at the Department of Justice, you know, putting
16 together an initiative that might bring resources from the
17 Criminal Division, the Civil Division, and the U.S.
18 attorneys together, you know, call it a Protecting Women
19 and Children Initiative, that would work then with States
20 to go after these coerced abortions, you know, to protect
21 these women, to help States enforce their laws, and to go
22 after these criminals who are using Joe Biden's policies to
23 commit assault left, right, and center?

24 Mr. Blanche. I very much commit to looking at that.
25 I share your concerns. The story you mentioned, I'm aware

1 of that story. It's horrible. I think a lot of that is
2 not necessarily a Federal crime, but the Federal Government
3 can certainly help in that space.

4 Senator Hawley. And I'll end with this, Mr. Chairman.
5 As a former State Attorney General, I can just tell you
6 that when you can get resources in investigation and
7 prosecution, it's immensely helpful. You've had tremendous
8 success with that already under your tenure in other
9 criminal areas. I think that if you were to stand up a
10 full-fledged initiative at DOJ, put somebody senior in
11 charge of it, to go after these actors who are abusing the
12 rules that Biden put in place, I think that would do a lot
13 for women and children and their safety in this country.

14 Mr. Blanche. Thank you, Senator.

15 Senator Hawley. Great.

16 Chairman Grassley. Before I go to Senator Schiff, I'd
17 like to enter another letter in the record. This supports
18 the nominees from civil rights lawyers who litigated cases
19 against the Justice Department across multiple presidential
20 Administrations. The letter states that "Mr. Blanche has
21 gone a long way to restoring faith in the rule of law and
22 has been especially encouraging to pro-life cause for which
23 so long has been relegated to a second-class status."

24 Without objection, that will be entered in the record.

25 [The letter appears in the appendix:]

1 / COMMITTEE INSERT

2 Chairman Grassley. Senator Schiff.

3 Senator Schiff. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr.

4 Blanche, you represented the President in at least three
5 criminal cases: the hush money payment case in New York,
6 the January 6 case, and the Mar-a-Lago classified documents
7 case. You said when you appeared last before this
8 Committee you would consult with ethics lawyers about that
9 apparent conflict of interest in handling any case
10 involving the President having been his personal counsel.
11 Did you consult with Joseph Tirrell, a senior ethics lawyer
12 at the Department?

13 Mr. Blanche. I believe I met with Mr. Tirrell, yes.

14 Senator Schiff. Did Mr. Tirrell tell you that ethics
15 laws and policies required that you not be involved in
16 cases involving your prior --

17 Mr. Blanche. Yes.

18 Senator Schiff. -- representation of the President?

19 Mr. Blanche. Yes.

20 Senator Schiff. So, in those three matters -- the
21 hush money payment case, January 6 case, Mar-a-Lago case --
22 you were to recuse yourself.

23 Mr. Blanche. I'm recused, correct.

24 Senator Schiff. So --

25 Mr. Blanche. Well, by the way, the cases are not

1 ongoing, Senator, but to the extent there's any work around
2 those cases, yes, I'm recused.

3 Senator Schiff. So, you said to CPAC a couple months
4 ago, "The other things that are happening, there is not a
5 single man or woman at the Department of Justice who had
6 anything to do with those prosecutions," meaning the
7 prosecution of the President. She was saying that it's not
8 a conflict of interest for you to be involved in the firing
9 of prosecutors who prosecuted your former client. There's
10 no conflict there? Is that --

11 Mr. Blanche. No, there is. I wasn't involved. That
12 would be a conflict.

13 Senator Schiff. So, at CPAC, you're taking credit for
14 the firing of these Department of Justice lawyers, but
15 you're not willing to take responsibility before this
16 Committee. Is that the case?

17 Mr. Blanche. No.

18 Senator Schiff. Okay.

19 Mr. Blanche. There was a statement I gave at CPAC.

20 Senator Schiff. You were bragging about this at CPAC,
21 the firing of these prosecutors, the firing of the FBI
22 agents. The getting rid of everyone who investigated your
23 client, you were proud of that, speaking for the Department
24 of Justice, but you don't think that's a conflict of
25 interest. You moved to vacate -- I don't think you're

1 going to deny involvement in this -- you moved to vacate
2 the convictions of 12 Proud Boys and Oath Keepers, which
3 erased their convictions, restored their gun rights. These
4 people were convicted in the January 6 investigation, which
5 also involved the President, who you represented. You were
6 involved in dismissing those cases, were you not?

7 Mr. Blanche. I'm the Acting Attorney General, so,
8 yes, my Department moved to dismiss. I was not involved,
9 no.

10 Senator Schiff. So, you didn't recuse yourself from
11 that matter. You're willing --

12 Mr. Blanche. No. There's no reason. From the Proud
13 Boys matter?

14 Senator Schiff. Yes, there is --.

15 Mr. Blanche. I mean, you're a lawyer. You know the
16 rules.

17 [Cross-talking.]

18 Mr. Blanche. There are rules that say when I have to
19 recuse --

20 Senator Schiff. Yes, there are rules --

21 Mr. Blanche. -- and that's not one of them.

22 Senator Schiff. There are rules, and when you're told
23 to recuse yourself from investigations --

24 Mr. Blanche. I always do.

25 Senator Schiff. -- in things you handle for the

1 President, you're supposed to recuse yourself. So you have
2 also --

3 Mr. Blanche. No, when I represented the President.

4 Senator Schiff. You've also refused to release Volume
5 2 of the Special Counsel's report. That was an
6 investigation into the Mar-a-Lago documents case. How is
7 that not an abundant conflict of interest, refusing to
8 release to the public an investigative report of an
9 investigation into your client?

10 Mr. Blanche. I am not a judge. A Federal judge has
11 said it could be released.

12 Senator Schiff. No, no, no, no, no. The Department's
13 position under you, Mr. Blanche, was do not release the
14 report. If you went --

15 Mr. Blanche. So, that position --

16 Senator Schiff. If you went into court asking them to
17 release it, it would be released by now. So, how is that
18 not a patent conflict of interest?

19 Mr. Blanche. What you're saying happens to not be
20 true. I did not do that. What you're talking about
21 happened before I became the Deputy Attorney General.

22 Senator Schiff. So, do you support the release of
23 Volume 2?

24 Mr. Blanche. No, I don't, but I'm recused and had
25 nothing to do with that case. Like, you can't accuse me of

1 violating my ethical rules and then lie about what I did.

2 Senator Schiff. So, you had nothing to do with the
3 decision to prohibit the release of the report? You had
4 nothing to do with the President's position?

5 Mr. Blanche. I wasn't in court. I wasn't the
6 deputy --

7 Senator Schiff. No, I'm not asking whether you were
8 in court.

9 Mr. Blanche. I was --

10 Senator Schiff. I'm asking you whether anyone sought
11 your opinion or used your guidance in refusing to release
12 Volume 2.

13 Mr. Blanche. When that that litigation was ongoing --

14 Senator Schiff. You're saying you had nothing to do
15 that decision?

16 Mr. Blanche. -- I was a private citizen still
17 representing the President of the United States. It was
18 before March. Since March, to the extent there's been
19 anything in front of that judge, I haven't been part of it.

20 Senator Schiff. Mr. Blanche, I asked you in your last
21 confirmation hearing whether you would release the report,
22 and your answer was no. Your answer was not, "I will
23 recuse my answer myself." Your answer was, no, I will not
24 release the report. That was your testimony last before
25 this committee. You subsequently were advised by ethics

1 lawyers not to be involved in these matters, but it appears
2 you were involved in these matters. Let me ask you about
3 another matter.

4 Mr. Blanche. But I wasn't involved.

5 Senator Schiff. Well, let --

6 Mr. Blanche. You can't say it appears I was involved
7 when I said I wasn't.

8 Senator Schiff. All right. Well, let me ask you
9 about another one you have your name on.

10 Mr. Blanche. Geez. The truth has to matter at some
11 point.

12 Senator Schiff. It does matter. We just don't hear
13 much of it from you, but let me ask you about another
14 matter you have your name on. I don't think you can deny
15 responsibility here, and that is the IRS settlement
16 agreement.

17 Mr. Blanche. Yes.

18 Senator Schiff. So, you put your name on this. That
19 absolves the President of tax liabilities in the past. The
20 President was convicted in the case you represented him in
21 of falsifying business records, in part, for tax purposes.
22 Does this settlement not absolve the President of any
23 liability for tax crimes associated with what he's already
24 been convicted of?

25 Mr. Blanche. That's not what he was convicted of, not

1 have anything to do for tax purposes.

2 Senator Schiff. Well, I'm happy to read the statement
3 of facts: "The participants took steps that
4 mischaracterized, for tax purposes, the true nature of the
5 payments made in furtherance of the scheme." So, you know,
6 Mr. Blanche, you --

7 Mr. Blanche. But the participant there was not the
8 President. It was somebody else.

9 Senator Schiff. Well, if the President is conspiring
10 with others to falsify business records to help them cheat
11 on taxes, he is also exposed to liability. You know that
12 as well as I do, and --

13 Mr. Blanche. He can't be audited for that.

14 Senator Schiff. Of course he can be. Of course he
15 can be, and he can be prosecuted for it, but the agreement
16 you signed on behalf of your former client, on behalf of
17 your current client in a staggering example of self-
18 dealing, prohibits that. Let me ask you this: does this
19 tax agreement, this addendum you signed, also hold him
20 harmless from any audit or tax liability with respect to
21 the billions in crypto money he made in his first year as
22 President?

23 Mr. Blanche. It's not forward looking, so to the
24 extent there are taxes filed by the President, or his sons,
25 or the Trump Organization after the date of that agreement,

1 there's no protection.

2 Senator Schiff. No, but before that agreement, so any

3 taxes --

4 Mr. Blanche. So, he hasn't filed taxes yet for money

5 he made last year, right?

6 Senator Schiff. Yes.

7 Mr. Blanche. So, no.

8 Senator Schiff. So, if he filed --

9 Mr. Blanche. So, no protection.

10 Senator Schiff. If he filed tax returns this year for

11 money he earned last year that his sons earned as his World

12 Liberty Financial all those people earned and defrauded

13 taxpayers on it, he faces no liability under this --

14 [Cross-talking.]

15 Mr. Blanche. There's no evidence taxpayers were

16 defrauded, and he is not protected. He is not protected.

17 Senator Schiff. But there is. There's evidence in

18 this agreement --

19 Mr. Blanche. He's not protected.

20 Senator Schiff. -- that you've absolved him of any

21 liability over it.

22 Mr. Blanche. No, I just said he's not absolved, so

23 the question was --

24 Senator Schiff. So, this agreement doesn't apply to a

25 tax return filed last year --

1 [Cross-talking.]

2 Senator Schiff. -- filed this year --

3 Mr. Blanche. To tax returns after the date of the
4 agreement, no, it does not apply.

5 Senator Schiff. Before the agreement. A tax return
6 filed in this calendar year before the agreement --

7 Mr. Blanche. Before the agreement it applies, not
8 after.

9 Senator Schiff. Yes. Okay. So, for a tax return
10 filed this year for last year, for the billions he made,
11 there is no tax liability. Even if he cheats on his taxes,
12 or his kids do, or his business do, he is absolved of that
13 further potential liability.

14 Mr. Blanche. No.

15 Senator Schiff. Well, it's in the plain language of
16 your agreement. Did you write this language, by the way?
17 Did you --

18 Mr. Blanche. You have to use the facts, though.

19 Senator Schiff. Did you --

20 Mr. Blanche. He hasn't filed taxes yet, so when he
21 files taxes, there's no protection based upon this
22 agreement.

23 Senator Schiff. Did you write this language?

24 Mr. Blanche. Did I type it up myself? No.

25 Senator Schiff. Did you write this language?

1 Mr. Blanche. No.

2 Senator Schiff. But you put your name to it.

3 Mr. Blanche. I did.

4 Senator Schiff. So, who wrote this?

5 Mr. Blanche. I don't know the person that actually

6 typed it. I don't know who it is. Someone within the

7 Department of Justice.

8 Senator Schiff. Was it one of the President's

9 lawyers, or was it someone from the Justice Department or

10 IRS?

11 Mr. Blanche. This document?

12 Senator Schiff. Yes.

13 Mr. Blanche. It would've been somebody within the

14 Department of Justice.

15 Senator Schiff. But you have no idea who that is?

16 Mr. Blanche. I don't know the name of the person that

17 typed it up.

18 Senator Schiff. And did you debate with them the

19 statute of limitations, which clearly would preclude the

20 President's claim, this \$10 billion lawsuit?

21 Mr. Blanche. We had extensive discussions internally

22 about the underlying litigation.

23 Senator Schiff. And did you reject the statute of

24 limitations defense?

25 Mr. Blanche. I'm not a judge. I don't reject things.

1 There was --

2 Senator Schiff. Well, you signed an agreement for the
3 U.S. --

4 Mr. Blanche. There was discussion around the
5 litigation.

6 Senator Schiff. You signed an agreement for the U.S.
7 basically indicating that the Justice Department's position
8 that the statute of limitations applies doesn't matter.

9 Mr. Blanche. That's not what I said. I didn't say
10 that anywhere.

11 Senator Schiff. Well, who rejected the 25 defenses
12 the IRS had to this sham lawsuit? Who rejected them? Who
13 said that these defenses we're not going to accept, we're
14 just going to go with the President's agreement in the
15 slush fund and immunity?

16 Mr. Blanche. There was a lot of discussion internally
17 about this.

18 Senator Schiff. But you made the decision.

19 Mr. Blanche. What's the decision? What do you mean?

20 Senator Schiff. You made the decision to not defend
21 the IRS and the Justice Department. You made the decision
22 and said to sign this slush fund agreement.

23 Mr. Blanche. We made the decision to settle the case,
24 correct.

25 Senator Schiff. Yeah, and in doing that, you

1 basically decided that you were going to be the lawyer for
2 the President and the lawyer for the IRS and the Justice
3 Department.

4 Mr. Blanche. No.

5 Senator Schiff. As the Court found in this case,
6 there was no adversarial relationship.

7 Mr. Blanche. Yes, sir.

8 Senator Schiff. The Court found it was a sham. It
9 was a collusive relationship. And what I don't understand,
10 Todd Blanche, what happened to the Todd Blanche who was a
11 prosecutor in the Southern District of New York? What
12 happened to the prosecutor people had respect for? What
13 happened to the prosecutor who once respected the rule of
14 law? What happened to the prosecutor who said that there
15 wouldn't be a whiff of political partisanship and then
16 prosecutes the President's enemies over seashells cases,
17 over making a video stating the plain law and Constitution?
18 What happened to the Todd Blanche of the Southern District
19 of New York that could convert him into you, someone
20 willing to say the President has both the right and the
21 duty to prosecute his political enemies?

22 Mr. Blanche. I never said that.

23 Senator Schiff. I cannot imagine the Todd Blanche of
24 the old days would have ever done that. What happened to
25 you, Todd Blanche? I'll tell you this. I think Robert

1 Caro had it right when he said that power doesn't corrupt
2 as much as it reveals. I suspect it has just revealed who
3 you are, and who you are is someone willing to sacrifice
4 everything you once believed in for that title, for that
5 position of Attorney General, and it is a sad story that we
6 have seen from Trump appointee after appointee after
7 appointee. We have seen people compromise themselves
8 little by little and then a lot by a lot, until they're
9 sitting before this committee and trying to justify the
10 unjustifiable. I yield back.

11 Mr. Blanche. May I just briefly respond, Chairman?

12 Chairman Grassley. Yes, you may.

13 Mr. Blanche. Very briefly. So, you asked me what
14 happened to Todd Blanche. I am still here. I am the same
15 exact person I was when I was a Federal prosecutor in the
16 SDNY, which is do the right thing and do everything you can
17 to keep communities safe. So, when I was a line
18 prosecutor, when I was a supervisor, when I was the head of
19 a division, my motivation and my goal was the same thing
20 with the people who worked with me and worked for me, which
21 is do the right thing, enforce the laws, and put bad guys
22 in jail. And so, you spend time talking about --

23 Senator Schiff. Well, that line prosecutor would
24 never have created a slush fund.

25 [Cross-talking.]

1 Mr. Blanche. I did not interrupt you. I did not
2 interrupt you. A little courtesy would be appropriate.

3 So, when you ask me what has changed, okay, and you
4 talk about a single document that I signed, okay, and
5 somebody had to sign that document when the President sued,
6 okay? So, I tried to do the right thing. What I do every
7 single day and what the prosecutors in this country do
8 every single day, and the nearly hundred thousand
9 indictments and informations that have been filed since
10 January 20 is exactly what everybody in this building
11 should want the Department of Justice to do, which is to
12 make our communities safer, enforce the laws both civilly
13 and criminally, and always do the right thing with
14 integrity, which is exactly what I'm doing. So, I am the
15 same Todd Blanche I was when I was a Federal prosecutor in
16 the SDNY.

17 Chairman Grassley. Before I call on the last senator
18 to ask questions, I'd like to enter into record a letter
19 supporting the nominee from Peter Forcellini, retired law
20 enforcement officer. As the NYPD homicide detective and
21 ATF special agent, Mr. Forcellini worked alongside Mr.
22 Blanche when he was a prosecutor in the Southern District
23 of New York. The letter states, "I know Todd Blanche to be
24 a quiet, thoughtful, softspoken man, but make no mistake:
25 beneath that measured demeanor is a tenacious, fair, and

1 deeply ethical Federal prosecutor. He is the kind of
2 lawyer who does not seek the spotlight, yet he consistently
3 delivers results grounded in the law and justice."

4 Without objection, that is entered in the record.

5 [The letter appears in the appendix:]

6 / COMMITTEE INSERT

7 Chairman Grassley. Senator Cruz.

8 Senator Cruz. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Blanche,
9 thank you for the job you are doing. It is rich seeing
10 Senate Democrats complaining about weaponization and
11 politicization of the Department of Justice after 4 years
12 in which they were complicit in the greatest abuse we have
13 ever seen of the Department of Justice. I want to do
14 something that was strikingly absent in much of the
15 questioning from our Democrat colleagues, which is actually
16 focus on facts instead of made-up stories, and I want to
17 compare where the Department was under Joe Biden to where
18 it is now under your leadership.

19 During the Biden Administration, the Justice
20 Department devoted extraordinary resources to investigating
21 and prosecuting President Trump and his supporters. Is
22 that correct, Mr. Blanche?

23 Mr. Blanche. It is.

24 Senator Cruz. The Department authorized Operation
25 Arctic Frost, which investigated members of Congress and

1 other political figures. Is that correct?

2 Mr. Blanche. Yes, Senator.

3 Senator Cruz. The Department's senior leadership --
4 Attorney General Merrick Garland, Deputy Attorney General
5 Lisa Monaco, FBI Director Chris Wray -- all personally
6 approved the opening of this investigation. Is that right?

7 Mr. Blanche. That's correct.

8 Senator Cruz. This investigation involved nearly 200
9 subpoenas, targeted over 400 Republican-aligned groups and
10 individuals. Is that right?

11 Mr. Blanche. Yes, Senator.

12 Senator Cruz. And then the FBI obtained, without our
13 knowledge, the cellphone data of 20 percent of the
14 Republicans in the Senate, including me and many of my
15 colleagues on this committee, as well as now FBI Director
16 Kash Patel and now White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles.
17 Is that correct?

18 Mr. Blanche. Yes, Senator.

19 Senator Cruz. Just yesterday, Chairman Grassley
20 revealed that even more senators' communications were
21 targeted. Jack Smith's team obtained and reviewed the text
22 messages of 44 members of Congress, including 19 Republican
23 senators. When the Department of Justice loses sight of
24 criminals because it has turned into a partisan arm of the
25 DNC, the American people pay the price. It also meant the

1 Department of Justice was not doing its job, which is
2 enforcing the law and putting criminals in jail. During
3 the Biden Administration, there were roughly 12 million
4 encounters at the Southern border. Is that correct?

5 Mr. Blanche. Yes.

6 Senator Cruz. Approximately 2 million illegal aliens
7 were known to have entered but were not apprehended, the
8 so-called gotaways. Is that right?

9 Mr. Blanche. Yes, that's correct.

10 Senator Cruz. Fentanyl became the leading cause of
11 death for Americans between the ages of 18 and 45. Is that
12 right?

13 Mr. Blanche. That's correct.

14 Senator Cruz. That was courtesy of the Democrats:
15 open border policies of letting drug dealers and human
16 traffickers flood into this country because they believed
17 it would benefit them politically. Violent transnational
18 criminal organizations, including the Sinaloa Cartel, the
19 Jalisco New Generation Cartel, MS-13, Tren de Aragua
20 expanded their operations inside the United States. Is
21 that right?

22 Mr. Blanche. It is absolutely correct.

23 Senator Cruz. And then something we never heard from
24 the Democrat side of the aisle: the victims. Jocelyn
25 Nungaray, I've not heard one Democrat so much as utter her

1 name, the little girl tragically raped and murdered by two
2 Venezuelan gang members, the Biden Administration released.
3 Laken Riley, again, the Democrats cannot even say her name.
4 Rachel Moran, a mom brutally raped and murdered by another
5 illegal, the Biden Justice Department released. These were
6 daughters, these were students, these were mothers, and
7 they would be alive if the Department of Justice had done
8 its duty. So, let's compare the lawlessness, the
9 partisanship, the abuse of power of the Biden Department of
10 Justice to what has happened in the last 18 months.

11 Mr. Blanche, objectively, the American people are
12 safer today than they were 18 months ago. Is that correct?

13 Mr. Blanche. There is no doubt.

14 Senator Cruz. Now, that's not simply empty rhetoric.
15 Since President Trump took office, Federal law enforcement
16 has arrested approximately 29,000 violent gang members. Is
17 that right?

18 Mr. Blanche. That's correct.

19 Senator Cruz. The Department has disrupted or
20 dismantled approximately 2,700 gangs, a 360-increase over
21 the comparable period of time in the previous
22 Administration. Is that right?

23 Mr. Blanche. That's correct.

24 Senator Cruz. Arrests of Tren de Aragua members have
25 increased by approximately 519 percent. Is that right?

1 Mr. Blanche. That's correct.

2 Senator Cruz. In 2025, the United States saw the
3 largest one-year drop in violent crime and murder since
4 1937. Homicides across America's largest cities fell more
5 than 19 percent. Is that right?

6 Mr. Blanche. That's right.

7 Senator Cruz. Robberies fell nearly 20 percent.
8 Aggravated assaults fell nearly 10 percent. That trend has
9 continued into this year, with homicides falling by yet
10 another 17.7 percent and robberies by over 20 percent
11 during the first quarter of 2026. Is that right?

12 Mr. Blanche. It is, yes.

13 Senator Cruz. The Department has also made protecting
14 America's children one of its highest priorities. Since
15 the beginning of this Administration, the FBI has allocated
16 approximately 7,200 child victims, a 42-percent increase.
17 Is that right?

18 Mr. Blanche. Yes.

19 Senator Cruz. The FBI has arrested approximately
20 3,500 child predators and human traffickers, a 102-percent
21 increase. Is that right?

22 Mr. Blanche. That's correct.

23 Senator Cruz. In April alone, Operation Iron Pursuit
24 located more than 200 child victims and arrested more than
25 350 alleged child sex abuse offenders. Is that right?

1 Mr. Blanche. That's right.

2 Senator Cruz. And across my home State of Texas,
3 Operation Soteria Shield rescued 89 children and resulted
4 in 276 child exploitation arrests. Is that right?

5 Mr. Blanche. That's the correct stat.

6 Senator Cruz. Mr. Blanche, after less than 18 months,
7 would it be fair to say that the Department is once again
8 focused on protecting the American people and faithfully
9 enacting the laws?

10 Mr. Blanche. That's exactly what we're focused on,
11 Senator.

12 Senator Cruz. And I will point out that one direct
13 result of that also is deaths by drug overdoses have
14 dropped 20 percent. There are literally thousands of
15 Americans who are alive today because of the job you and
16 your colleagues at the Department of Justice are doing, and
17 I for one want to say thank you for focusing the Department
18 on saving people's lives and putting criminals in jail.

19 Mr. Blanche. We have great prosecutors, Senator, and
20 great agents.

21 Senator Cruz. Now, I want to go to a topic that
22 Senator Hawley asked you about, which is the Biden
23 Administration rule concerning the abortion pill. 18 USC
24 Section 1461, Comstock Act, provides that every article or
25 thing designed or adapted or intended for producing

1 abortion is declared to be nonmailable. I have to admit
2 that statutory text to me looks quite straightforward. It
3 is not subtle. It is not difficult. It is
4 straightforward. As you know, during the Biden
5 Administration, the Office of Legal Counsel issued an
6 opinion concluding that those provisions generally do not
7 prohibit mailing abortion drugs unless the sender intends
8 them to be used unlawfully. Is that right?

9 Mr. Blanche. Yes, that's correct.

10 Senator Cruz. Now, Office Legal Counsel opinions may
11 be reconsidered when the Attorney General concludes they
12 are inconsistent with the law. Is that right?

13 Mr. Blanche. That is right.

14 Senator Cruz. Will you commit to carefully reviewing
15 that opinion to ensure that it is faithfully reflects the
16 actual statutory text that Congress enacted?

17 Mr. Blanche. Yes.

18 Senator Cruz. Likewise, as Senator Hawley asked,
19 Louisiana v. FDA remains pending before the 5th Circuit.
20 Without asking you to comment on the merits of that
21 litigation, will you commit that the Department will
22 carefully evaluate every lawful action available to ensure
23 the faithful enforcement of the Comstock Act and other
24 Federal pro-life acts?

25 Mr. Blanche. Yes.

1 Senator Cruz. And I want to point out the real
2 consequences of the Biden Administration's lawless
3 authorization of mail order abortions. According to FDA
4 reporting, the abortion pill has taken more than 3.7
5 million unborn lives, caused 24 maternal deaths -- moms are
6 being killed -- and resulted in at least 4,195 adverse
7 maternal reactions, including hemorrhage, excruciating
8 abdominal pain, and severe life-threatening infections.
9 The position of the Democrats now seem to be that women and
10 teenage girls should be able to be get mail order abortions
11 without a doctor being involved at all, and I will tell
12 you, the death toll from that is horrific, and it needs to
13 stop.

14 Final question. Will you commit as Attorney General
15 to faithfully and vigorously defending the Second Amendment
16 right to keep and bear arms?

17 Mr. Blanche. Yes, absolutely.

18 Senator Cruz. Thank you.

19 Chairman Grassley. Mr. Blanche, thank you for your
20 testimony today, and to your family and friends who are
21 here, I thank you all as well. You should be very proud of
22 your performance today. I think you performed admirably,
23 showed this entire country that you're eminently qualified
24 to serve as Attorney General. If confirmed, I'm confident,
25 very confident that you'll continue to do that superb job.

1 Now, for everyone's information, written questions can
2 be submitted for the record until 5:00 p.m., this Friday,
3 July 17. I hope, as the nominee, when you receive those
4 questions, please answer and return them to the Committee
5 as soon as possible.

6 [The information appears in the appendix:]

7 / COMMITTEE INSERT

8 Chairman Grassley. This hearing is adjourned, but I
9 want to say we'll reconvene tomorrow here at 9:00 a.m. for
10 an executive business meeting and hopefully, that doesn't
11 take very long. Immediately following that business
12 meeting, we'll have a panel of outside witnesses on this
13 nomination.

14 Meeting adjourned.

15 Mr. Blanche. Thank you, Senator.

16 [Whereupon, at 2:02 p.m., the Committee was
17 adjourned.]

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

C O N T E N T S

STATEMENT OF:	PAGE
THE HONORABLE CHUCK GRASSLEY a United States Senator from the State of Iowa	2
THE HONORABLE RICHARD J. DURBIN a United States Senator from the State of Illinois	11
THE HONORABLE ASHLEY MOODY a United States Senator from the State of Florida	22
THE HONORABLE TODD BLANCHE to be Attorney General of the United States	28