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

November 24, 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTOR, FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
DIRECTOR, EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR U.S. ATTORNEYS
ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL, CRIMINAL DIVISION
ALL UNITED STATES ATTORNEYS

FROM: THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

SUBJECT: COORDINATING WITH FEDERAL, STATE, LOCAL, TRIBAL, AND TERRITORIAL PROSECUTORS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT TO ADDRESS CRIMINAL CONDUCT ON COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT

This holiday season, millions will travel across the nation and around the world on commercial aircraft. The Department of Justice is concerned about a rise in criminal behavior occurring on commercial flights that endangers the safety of passengers, flight crews, and flight attendants.

Passengers who assault, intimidate, or threaten violence against flight crews and flight attendants do more than harm those employees; they prevent the performance of critical duties that help ensure safe air travel. Similarly, when passengers commit violent acts against other passengers in the close confines of a commercial aircraft, the conduct endangers everyone aboard.

Federal law prohibits assaults, intimidation, and threats of violence that interfere with flight crews and flight attendants, as well as other enumerated criminal acts that occur during flight. The laws of other jurisdictions may also prohibit criminal acts occurring on commercial aircraft.

To help ensure that the Department is notified about criminal conduct occurring on commercial aircraft, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Department have created an information-sharing protocol. This protocol has already resulted in the referral of dozens of incidents by the FAA to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for investigation.

The Department of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security, and the FAA, as well as state, local, Tribal, and territorial prosecutorial authorities and law enforcement agencies, all have roles to play in protecting passengers, flight crews, and flight attendants.

I am directing United States Attorneys to prioritize prosecution of federal crimes occurring on commercial aircraft that endanger the safety of passengers, flight crews, and flight attendants. I am further directing United States Attorneys to communicate to the relevant

federal, state, local, Tribal, and territorial prosecutorial authorities and law enforcement agencies (including airport authority law enforcement) in their districts that this is a Departmental priority. These conversations should: encourage direct communication with the relevant federal law enforcement points of contact regarding incidents that potentially violate federal criminal statutes; reaffirm the Department's availability to assist federal, state, local, Tribal, and territorial law enforcement, when appropriate; and encourage complete and timely reporting of criminal incidents that potentially violate federal criminal statutes. Contact with the appropriate agency or agencies should be made as soon as possible within the next 20 days.

The Department of Justice is committed to using its resources to do its part to prevent violence, intimidation, threats of violence, and other criminal behavior that endangers the safety of passengers, flight crews, and flight attendants on commercial aircraft. Through your hard work, you are helping to ensure that people across the country can travel safely this holiday season and beyond.