

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 26, 2026

Dear Acting Attorney General Blanche:

At your direction, the Department of Justice (DOJ) announced an “Anti-Weaponization Fund,” drawn from taxpayer money, as part of a purported “settlement” of the sitting President’s \$10 billion collusive lawsuit against the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).¹ Contrary to the legal advice of career civil servants in the IRS Office of Chief Counsel to seek dismissal of the President’s lawsuit against an agency within his control,² and days after court-appointed amici counsel enumerated myriad reasons for dismissal,³ the Department announced the settlement before the court could act. This is an act of corruption shocking even for this Administration.

This \$1.776 billion fund was announced without congressional authorization, court oversight, or public input and bears no connection to the lawsuit it purports to settle. As you have stated, there is “no limitation on the claims” that could be filed with the Fund,⁴ although the Department contemplates that “literally tens of millions of Americans . . . subjected to improper and unlawful government targeting, including extensive government censorship and aggressive lawfare” could pursue claims under the Fund.⁵ These “tens of millions of Americans” would include individuals tried and convicted for participating in the most violent attack on the peaceful transfer of power in American history on January 6, 2021.⁶

In the face of bipartisan public outcry and after a court issued a temporary restraining order pausing the Fund, you testified before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies on June 2, 2026, that the Department is “not moving forward with the fund, period.”⁷ But that purported reversal does not end the inquiry; it deepens it. You have refused both to commit, in writing before Congress, to ending the Fund and to

¹ U.S. Dep’t of Justice, *Justice Department Announces Anti-Weaponization Fund* (May 18, 2026), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/media/1441201/dl?inline>; see Office of the Attorney General, Order (May 18, 2026), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/media/1441086/dl>.

² Andrew Duehren, *The I.R.S. Thought It Could Fight Trump’s Lawsuit, but It Struck a Deal Anyway*, N.Y. TIMES (May 19, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/05/19/admin/irs-trump-lawsuit-deal.html?smid=url-share>.

³ Mem. of Law by Court-Appointed Amici Curiae, *Trump v. Internal Revenue Service*, No. 1:26-cv-20609 (S.D. Fla. May 14, 2026), ECF No. 45.

⁴ Sen. Collins Asks Acting AG for Anti-Weaponization Fund’s Legal Basis (May 19, 2026), <https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/news/majority/sen-collins-asks-acting-ag-for-anti-weaponization-funds-legal-basis>; see *A Review of the President’s Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Request for the Department of Justice: Hearing Before the Subcom. On Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies of the S. Comm. On Appropriations*, 119th Cong. (May 19, 2026), <https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/hearings/a-review-of-the-presidents-fiscal-year-2027-budget-request-for-the-department-of-justice>.

⁵ U.S. Dep’t of Justice, *Overview of the Department of Justice’s Anti-Weaponization Fund* (May 21, 2026), https://d3i6fh83elv35t.cloudfront.net/static/2026/05/DOJ-Fact-Sheet-May-21-FINAL_v2.pdf

⁶ President Trump has publicly expressed his desire to compensate those charged in connection with the January 6th Capitol attack, stating: “If it was up to me, I’d pay them the kind of money that they deserve.” *Read the transcript: President Donald Trump interviewed by NBC News’ ‘Meet the Press’ moderator Kristen Welker*, NBC NEWS (June 7, 2026), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/donald-trump/read-transcript-president-donald-trump-interviewed-nbc-news-meet-press-rcna348508>.

⁷ Hailey Fuchs & Jordain Carney, *‘Anti-Weaponization Fund’ is dead, acting AG says*, POLITICO (June 2, 2026), <https://www.politico.com/news/2026/06/02/todd-blanche-anti-weaponization-fund-00947083>.

submit a sworn declaration requested by a federal court. The record makes clear that DOJ did not abandon this fund because it was unlawful, but because ongoing litigation and political backlash rendered its pursuit untenable, at least for the moment.⁸

The “Anti-Weaponization Fund” is plainly illegal. At a bare minimum, the establishment of the Fund violates requirements the Department itself has imposed on settlements that direct payments to non-governmental third parties in the *Justice Manual*.⁹ But the central question this letter demands you answer is not whether the fund will proceed, but whether the head of the Department of Justice ignored the Department’s own rules to carry out an act of corruption designed to benefit the President and his allies. This question does not become moot simply because courts and public pressure forced the Department to reverse course.

In light of these serious concerns and the unprecedented nature of this suspect payout, provide complete written responses to each of the following questions no later than **July 8, 2026**, and produce all documents related to the negotiation, approval, and structure of this settlement.

Strong Connection to the Underlying Violation (Justice Manual § 1-17.000, Section I)

The *Justice Manual* requires that all third-party payments in a settlement “have a strong connection to the underlying violation or violations of federal law at issue.” The underlying case concerned the unauthorized disclosure of President Trump’s tax returns during the first Trump Administration. This unlawful disclosure was a specific and discrete criminal act, for which the perpetrator—a federal contractor who was later prosecuted by the Biden Administration—has already been convicted. Yet, the Department has announced that the Fund will compensate a broadly defined class of persons who allege they were victims of government “lawfare and weaponization,” including those who attacked the U.S. Capitol on January 6.¹⁰

1. Explain, with specificity, how disbursements to a class of claimants claiming to be “victims of lawfare and weaponization” bear a strong connection to the criminal conduct of an individual contractor who leaked President Trump’s tax returns in 2019 and 2020.
2. Identify the specific statutory authority under which the Judgment Fund may be used to create a new compensation program for persons who are not parties to the underlying litigation and whose claims were not adjudicated or reduced to judgment in any court.

Prohibition on Departmental Control (Justice Manual § 1-17.000, Section I)

The *Justice Manual* prohibits the Department and its client agencies from retaining “post-settlement control over the disposition or management of the funds.” Yet, as announced, the Anti-Weaponization Fund would be governed by five commissioners handpicked by the

⁸ See *id.*; Def.’s Notice of Filing, *Floyd v. Dep’t of Justice*, No. 1:26-cv-01399 (E.D. Va. June 19, 2026), ECF No. 93 (declining to submit a declaration under penalty of perjury that the declarants will not create or operate the Anti-Weaponization Fund).

⁹ U.S. Dep’t of Justice, *Justice Manual* § 1-1.17.000, <https://www.justice.gov/jm/jm/1-17000-settlement-payments-third-parties>; see Office of the Attorney General, *Reinstating the Prohibition on Improper Third-Party Settlements* (Feb. 5, 2025), <https://www.justice.gov/ag/media/1388536/dl?inline>.

¹⁰ *Supra* n.1.

Attorney General. Moreover, the Fund would provide the Attorney General quarterly updates and the Fund will remain subject to audit by DOJ at its discretion.¹¹

3. Explain how this governance structure complies with the prohibition on post-settlement departmental control and identify any legal authority permitting the arrangement as described.

Prohibition on Third-Party Selection (Justice Manual § 1-17.000, Section I)

The *Justice Manual* provides that DOJ “shall not propose the selection of any particular third party to receive payments” and “shall not propose a specific entity to be the beneficiary.” Yet, DOJ appears to have pre-identified categories of claimants who could be paid out under the fund, including “millions of Americans whose online speech was censored at the behest of the government, parents silenced at schoolboards, Senators whose records were secretly subpoenaed, churchgoers targeted by the FBI, and so on.”¹²

4. Explain how the structure of the Fund complies with the prohibition on DOJ involvement in beneficiary selection.

Public Input (Justice Manual § 1-17.000, Section II.B)

For civil settlements where a court would not have the authority to order a third-party payment, the *Justice Manual* requires that a copy of the settlement agreement be made publicly available for a reasonable period and that the public have an opportunity to submit input before the settlement becomes final. Here, after the President voluntarily dismissed his complaint, the district court noted that the settlement agreement was never docketed, leaving no “settlement of record” and stripping the court of jurisdiction.¹³

5. Confirm whether: (a) the settlement is subject to any court approval; (b) the settlement agreement in its entirety has been or will be made publicly available; and (c) a public input was conducted or is planned and what form it took or will take. If no to any of these questions, describe how the Department complied with the public notice and input requirements of Justice Manual Section 1-17.000, Section II.B.

Deputy Attorney General Approval (Justice Manual § 1-17.000, Section I)

The *Justice Manual* requires that DOJ components proposing a settlement involving payment to a non-governmental third party must obtain the approval of the Deputy Attorney General or the Associate Attorney General, with an accompanying explanation of how the settlement complies with § 1-17.000’s guidelines and limitations.

6. Confirm whether you and/or the Associate Attorney General approved this settlement and provide the written record of any such approval and the accompanying explanation of how the settlement complies with § 1-17.000.

¹¹ *Id.*; *supra* n.5.

¹² *Supra* n.5.

¹³ Order Closing Case, *Trump v. Internal Revenue Service*, No. 1:26-cv-20609-KMW (S.D. Fla. May 18, 2026), ECF No. 62.

Your actions to create the Anti-Weaponization Fund raise every concern that DOJ's rules limiting third-party settlements were designed to address. These rules exist to prevent DOJ from abusing its broad settlement authority to direct funds to preferred non-governmental entities, an abuse that improperly circumvents the congressional appropriations process and that members of both parties have long condemned.¹⁴

The *Justice Manual* violations described above represent only one dimension of the illegality of this Fund. As additional details emerge, rest assured that we will continue to pursue answers.

Your prompt attention to this matter is expected.


Sincerely,



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

¹⁴ E.g., Letter from Senator Charles Grassley, Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman, to The Honorable Jeff Sessions, Attorney General (June 14, 2017), [https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2017-06-14%20CEG%20to%20DOJ%20Sessions%20\(DOJ%20Settlements%20Policy%20Change\).pdf](https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2017-06-14%20CEG%20to%20DOJ%20Sessions%20(DOJ%20Settlements%20Policy%20Change).pdf).