

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 2, 2024

The Honorable Merrick Garland  
Attorney General, United States Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20530

The Honorable Christopher A. Wray  
Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation  
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20535

Dear Attorney General Garland and Director Wray:

I write to the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) regarding rising threats of violence, harassment and intimidation targeting election workers in Georgia and nationwide.

Protecting the integrity of our elections depends on protecting those who run them. Yet over the last several years, election workers in Georgia and across the country have reported increased intimidation, harassment, and threats of violence. Election workers have been the victims of doxing and swatting, receiving death threats and facing other harassment and intimidation. According to a recent Brennan Center survey of election workers nationwide, 38% report experiencing threats, harassment, or abuse in their role, and their concerns about their own physical safety have increased since last year.<sup>1</sup>

Violent threats against election workers and officials have contributed to significant staff turnover, posing a challenge to the efficient administration of elections.<sup>2</sup> In the 2022 election cycle, six of Georgia's most populous counties, representing nearly a third of all active voters in the state, had new election directors.<sup>3</sup> Now, with the 2024 primary elections underway and the general election upcoming, DOJ must ensure the safety of election workers across the country in order to protect free and fair elections. I urge the DOJ and FBI to prioritize efforts to protect our

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<sup>1</sup> *Local Election Officials Survey – May 2024*, BRENNAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE (May 1, 2024), <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/local-election-officials-survey-may-2024>.

<sup>2</sup> Eileen Sullivan, *Election Workers Face Flood of Threats, but Charges are Few*, N.Y. TIMES (Apr. 13, 2024), <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/13/us/politics/election-workers-threats.html>.

<sup>3</sup> *The Changing Election Security Landscape: Threats to Election Officials and Infrastructure: Hearing Before the H. Comm. On Homeland Sec.*, 117th Cong. 4 (2022) (statement of Elizabeth Howard, Senior Counsel, Brennan Center for Justice).


election workers and to investigate any such threats expeditiously. I also request responses in writing to the following questions by July 26, 2024.

1. For each FBI field office, how many field agents or full-time equivalents are there dedicated to receiving, processing, and responding to reported crimes involving threats of violence to election workers?
2. What personnel hiring, training, or administrative changes have been made for FBI field agents (if any) given the rising threats made towards election workers, and in anticipation of public tensions rising ahead of the election in November? What additional response is the FBI prepared to undertake in the future?
3. What additional resources or guidance are being provided to field agents (if any) to investigate threats made through advanced technologies such as generative artificial intelligence?
4. How has the FBI responded to any recent or current internal challenges with understaffing given the large number of reported threats against election workers?
5. How many investigations have been opened since 2021 because of tips related to threats of violence to election workers? How many investigations have been opened in 2024? What information does the FBI rely on to determine whether it is appropriate to open an investigation?
6. How many criminal prosecutions have been initiated since 2021 against individuals alleged to have made threats of violence against election workers? How many have been initiated in 2024? What is the DOJ's reasoning for determining whether it is appropriate to pursue prosecution?
7. Where criminal charges are inappropriate, what steps do you take to ensure the safety of threatened election workers and officials?

To promote transparency, I encourage the DOJ to respond in a manner that can be made public; however, should it be necessary, I am willing to accept confidential responses, as well.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your continued work to ensure the safety of our nation's election workers and our larger democratic voting process. I look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



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Jon Ossoff

United States Senator