

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 20, 2025

## VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

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

The Honorable Kash Patel  
Director  
Federal Bureau of Investigations  
953 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20535

Dear Attorney General Bondi and Director Patel,

I write to follow up on my previous December 2024 request that the Department of Justice fully investigate the racist and discriminatory mass text campaign that targeted Black, Hispanic, and LGBTQ Georgians, including children, in November 2024. According to subsequent reporting, the texts may have been the result of a coordinated, sophisticated attack.<sup>1</sup> In light of that reporting, I ask that you redouble your investigatory efforts to identify the perpetrators of this hateful campaign and hold them accountable.

In the wake of the 2024 presidential election, anonymous senders targeted Black, Hispanic, and LGBTQ+ individuals with hateful messages intended to intimidate and harass.<sup>2</sup> Among other disturbing messages, texts to Black Georgians threatened that recipients must report to “pick cotton at the nearest plantation” so they are not “whipped.”<sup>3</sup> Latino and LGBTQ victims received similar threats, suggesting they “were selected for deportation” or were “to report to a reeducation camp.”<sup>4</sup>

What initially appeared to be the work of a handful of hateful actors is now thought, according to a recent NPR report, to be the result of a coordinated attack designed specifically to evade safeguards intended to protect the public from spam and hate speech.<sup>5</sup> According to NPR, “15 to 20 different 10-digit phone numbers flooded the text service eco-system with vitriolic missives, directly targeting vulnerable young Americans, particularly students in high school and

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<sup>1</sup> Jenna McLaughlin, *How did racist mass texts bypass some anti-spam guardrails after the election?*, NPR (Feb. 2, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/02/g-s1-41598/students-racist-text-messages-black-lgbtq-election>.

<sup>2</sup> Joyce Lupiani et al., *Georgia residents reporting disturbing racist messages before, after election*, Fox 5 Atl. (Nov. 7, 2024), <https://www.fox5atlanta.com/news/georgia-residents-reporting-disturbing-racist-messages-before-after-election>.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> Kim Bellware, et al., *FBI investigating post-election text threats sent to Latino, LGBTQ people*, Wash. Post (Nov. 18, 2024), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2024/11/18/election-texts-fbi-investigation/>.

<sup>5</sup> McLaughlin, *supra* n.1.

college.”<sup>6</sup> The attackers used free or low-cost digital numbers, disguised their locations, quickly abandoned online accounts and attacked multiple systems simultaneously to find vulnerabilities.<sup>7</sup> These strategic decisions indicate a level of knowledge of the mass text communications ecosystem more closely associated with professional criminals than with pranksters.

When I first raised this issue, I feared for the health and safety of Georgians targeted by these text messages. Now I am also concerned that the same bad actors have identified vulnerabilities in anti-spam systems and are biding their time before their next attack. For that reason, and because this behavior may have violated federal and state law, it is imperative that the Department of Justice thoroughly investigate this attack before others are similarly terrorized.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon Ossoff", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Senator Jon Ossoff

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<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*