

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 17, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Bondi
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave SE
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
Secretary of Health and Human Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services
200 Independence Ave SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

The Honorable Lori Chavez-DeRemer
Secretary of Labor
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Attorney General Bondi and Secretaries Noem, Rubio, Kennedy, and Chavez-DeRemer:

I write to express alarm at reports that key initiatives to combat human trafficking and child exploitation have been cut back across the Federal government. According to public reports, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Department of State, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and Department of Labor have made cuts to and deprioritized trafficking prevention programs.¹

Over the last two years, I have led bipartisan inquiries into reports of chronic understaffing among the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) field office teams responsible for processing and investigating allegations of child sexual abuse. The inquiries also addressed a reported lack of capacity at FBI to address human trafficking and child exploitation. My concerns have grown in light of recent reports of additional staffing and program cuts at FBI and other agencies across the federal government.

Staff across law enforcement agencies have reportedly been reassigned from positions combatting child trafficking and exploitation to immigration enforcement, often with no criminal nexus. In 2023, DHS Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) identified or rescued 1,806

¹ Aaron Glantz et al., *Revealed: Trump Administration Retreats on Combating Human Trafficking and Child Exploitation*, THE GUARDIAN (Sept. 17, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/sep/17/trump-human-trafficking-programs-cut>.

children and arrested 4,214 suspects for crimes involving the sexual exploitation of children.² Reports indicate that today, nearly all HSI agents have been pulled from their prior missions, including combatting child sexual exploitation.³ According to recent reports, HSI agents nationwide worked the fewest hours on child exploitation from February through April of this year than they have during that period in more than a decade.⁴ In at least one case, HSI agents reportedly lost contact with a key source as a result of their reassignment, hindering progress toward identifying and rescuing a child facing violent sexual abuse.⁵

Similarly, staff from law enforcement agencies across the DOJ whose responsibility it is to enforce against the trafficking and sexual abuse of children have reportedly been taken off this critical work. Roughly one in five agents at the Federal Bureau of Investigation have reportedly been reassigned,⁶ including agents responsible for investigating child exploitation.⁷ Reports indicate that prosecutors in all 93 U.S. Attorney's offices have been reassigned as well.⁸ Meanwhile, in July, the State Department reportedly gutted the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, cutting more than 70% of staff in the office, which is responsible for leading the U.S. government's anti-trafficking efforts.⁹

Staffing cuts and reassignments are compounded by reported cuts to funding and programs to prevent child trafficking, exploitation, and abuse. Many DOJ, State Department, and Department of Labor grants to prevent trafficking or provide services to victims of crime have reportedly been terminated or stalled.¹⁰ Earlier this year, HHS moved to cut funding for legal services for unaccompanied children, putting vulnerable children directly at risk of trafficking and exploitation.¹¹ Particularly in conjunction with the de-prioritization of enforcement against alleged child trafficking, exploitation, and abuse, cuts to these programs put children across the country at risk.

² Press Release, Dep't of Homeland Security, Homeland Security Investigations, Partners Conduct US-Based International Victim Identification Surge (Mar. 12, 2024), <https://www.dhs.gov/archive/hsi/news/2024/03/12/hsipartners-conduct-us-based-international-victim-identification-surge>.

³ America's Voice, *Fact Sheet: Trump's Immigration Enforcement Dragnet is Undermining Public Safety Across America* (Sept. 25, 2025), <https://americasvoice.org/facts/fact-sheet-trumps-immigration-enforcement-dragnet-is-undermining-public-safety-across-america/>.

⁴ Nicholas Young et al., *Homeland Security Missions Falter Amid Focus on Deportations*, N.Y. TIMES (Nov. 16, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/11/16/us/politics/dhs-agents-reassigned.html>.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ House Judiciary Committee Democratic Members, *Epstein is the Tip of the Iceberg: The Trump Administration is Dismantling the Anti-Human Trafficking Infrastructure and Coddling Human Traffickers, Sexual Predators, and Rapists* (Sept. 16, 2025), <https://democrats-judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/democrats-judiciary.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/2025-09-16.hjc-dem-memo-re-trump-record-harming-and-disregarding-survivors.pdf>.

⁷ E.g., Sadie Gurman et al., *How Trump's Sweeping Expulsions Have Thrown the FBI Into Chaos*, WALL ST J. (Feb. 5, 2025), <https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/trump-fbi-firings-immigration-crime-ad7d6b44> (“One agent who investigates child exploitation was recently directed to help the Department of Homeland Security with immigration work”).

⁸ America's Voice, *supra* note 4.

⁹ Glantz et al., *supra* note 1.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ Rebecca Santana, *Trump Administration Cuts Legal Help for Migrant Children Traveling Alone*, AP NEWS (Mar. 21, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/trump-legal-aid-unaccompanied-children-immigration-court-127a69ce69573d2d16c72a74dacef3ab>.

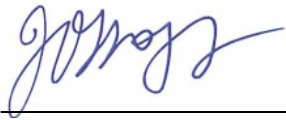
Given these concerns about the administration's capacity to fully address human trafficking and child exploitation, I request a response to the following questions by January 14, 2026:

1. How many individuals, including agents and other personnel, who were previously working full- or part-time on human trafficking, child trafficking, and child sexual abuse issues at DOJ, DHS, Department of State, HHS, and Department of Labor have been reassigned to other work in 2025? Please provide breakdowns by agency, subcomponent agency, and department.
 - a. How many individuals have been reassigned temporarily?
 - b. How many have been reassigned permanently?
 - c. For the Department of State, how has the recent reorganization impacted its ability work on these issues?
2. How many individuals, including agents and other personnel, who were previously working full- or part-time on human trafficking, child trafficking, and child sexual abuse issues at DOJ, DHS, Department of State, HHS, and Department of Labor have been terminated in 2025? Please provide breakdowns by agency, subcomponent agency, and department.
3. How many individuals, including agents and other personnel, working full- or part-time on human trafficking, child trafficking, and child sexual abuse issues remain at DOJ, DHS, Department of State, HHS, and Department of Labor? Please provide breakdowns by agency, subcomponent agency, and department and indicate whether remaining staff are working full-time on these issues or part-time.
4. What was the average caseload for an FBI staffer working on matters of child sexual exploitation in 2024? How has it changed in 2025?
5. How has the rate of child-focused investigations at DOJ, DHS, Department of State, HHS, and Department of Labor changed between 2025 and the five prior years? Please provide data, by agency, for each of those years.
6. How many grants for the prevention of human trafficking, child trafficking, and child abuse or exploitation have been cut, delayed, or frozen at DOJ, DHS, Department of State, HHS, and Department of Labor in 2025? Please provide details about each impacted grant, including its purpose, recipient (or intended recipient), and funding amount.
7. How many grants for the provision of services to victims of human trafficking, child trafficking, and child abuse or exploitation have been cut, delayed, or frozen at DOJ, DHS, Department of State, HHS, and Department of Labor in 2025? Please provide details about each impacted grant, including its purpose, recipient (or intended recipient), and funding amount.

8. Did each of the agencies you lead assess potential impacts to child safety before implementing the aforementioned staffing, funding, or programming reallocations and/or cuts? If so, please provide copies of those assessments.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon Ossoff", is positioned above a horizontal line.

Jon Ossoff
United States Senator