



CITIZENS FOR
RESPONSIBILITY &
ETHICS IN WASHINGTON

July 6, 2026

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Chair, Judiciary Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Ranking Member, Judiciary Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Oppose Todd Blanche's nomination for Attorney General

Dear Leader Thune, Leader Schumer, Chair Grassley and Ranking Member Durbin:

On behalf of Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW), I write to urge all senators to reject Todd Blanche's nomination for attorney general of the United States. Confirming Blanche as attorney general would solidify the Department of Justice's (DOJ) transformation into an agency accountable only to the president, whose powers are wielded in his interest, rather than that of American citizens.

CREW is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization dedicated to fighting corruption and promoting publicly accountable, transparent and ethical governance. Blanche's nomination poses a unique threat to this mission and to DOJ's independence and integrity that compels our opposition.

The Department of Justice is intended to protect and promote the American people's interests. DOJ prosecutors swear an oath to "support and defend the Constitution of the United States"—they do not swear an oath to the president.¹ Perhaps that is why throughout modern history, no individual has transitioned from defending the president as a private citizen in criminal suits to leading the department that prosecuted those suits against him.² Blanche's record as acting attorney general and deputy attorney general confirms that he has continued to act, first and foremost, in the president's interest and not in allegiance to the Constitution.

- **Blanche approved and defended the conflicted settlement of President Trump's lawsuit against his own administration.** As part of the *Trump v. IRS* settlement, Blanche established an illegal, nearly \$1.8 billion dollar slush fund to funnel

¹ See 28 U.S.C. § 544; 5 U.S.C. § 1331.

² See Erica Orden et al., "Todd's sort of lead horse": Trump's former criminal defense lawyer ascends DOJ, Politico (Apr. 3, 2026), <https://www.politico.com/news/2026/04/03/todd-blanche-attorney-general-justice-department-00857027>.

payments to purported victims of government weaponization,³ before bipartisan outrage and a federal judge forced him to backtrack.⁴ Blanche also personally signed the settlement's order granting President Trump and his inner circle civil and criminal immunity on topics wholly unrelated to the lawsuit, including "Lawfare and/or Weaponization" and "any matters currently pending or that could be pending" before any government agency or department.⁵ Far from abandoning this settlement, Blanche's DOJ continues to defend against lawsuits brought by CREW and others to block the slush fund and has refused a court's request for a declaration, under penalty of perjury, that the fund will not proceed in any manner.⁶ And Blanche has affirmed to Congress that "nothing has changed" regarding plans to implement the settlement's other terms,⁷ including its provision granting unprecedented immunity to Trump, his family and his affiliates.

- **Blanche has misused the DOJ's power to investigate and indict Trump's political enemies.** In his prior nomination hearing, Blanche testified, "Political prosecutions should never happen, period."⁸ Despite this commitment, in his short time as acting attorney general, Blanche has aggressively pursued cases against public critics of President Trump. He installed new leadership to fast-track an investigation into former CIA Director John Brennan, who helped investigate Russian interference in President Trump's 2016 campaign.⁹ Blanche approved an indictment of former FBI Director James Comey in a case legal experts expect to be quickly dismissed in court.¹⁰ He authorized inquiries into former White House aide Cassidy Hutchinson, who provided testimony implicating President Trump in the January 6th attack on the Capitol.¹¹ And he supported DOJ's indictment of the Southern Poverty Law Center,¹² which legal experts have criticized as insubstantial and conservative

³ Press Release, Dep't of Justice, Justice Department Announces Anti-Weaponization Fund (May 18, 2026), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-announces-anti-weaponization-fund>.

⁴ Sam Levine, *Judge extends block on Trump's \$1.8bn 'anti-weaponization' fund*, Guardian (June 12, 2026), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/jun/12/judge-extends-block-trump-anti-weaponization-fund>.

⁵ Order, Office of the Attorney Gen. (May 19, 2026), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/media/1441216/dl>.

⁶ See, e.g., Defs.' Resp. to Pls.' Mot. for a Temporary Restraining Order, *CREW v. Dep't of Justice*, No. 1:26-cv-01789 (D.D.C. filed June 5, 2026), ECF No. 15; Defs.' Notice of Filing at 1, *Floyd v. United States*, No. 1:26-cv-01399 (E.D. Va. filed June 19, 2026), ECF No. 93.

⁷ *Oversight Hearing - Department of Justice Before the H. Comm. on Appropriations Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Subcommittee* 53:00, 119th Cong. (2026), <https://appropriations.house.gov/schedule/hearings/oversight-hearing-department-justice-0>.

⁸ *Nominations Hearing Before the S. Comm. on the Judiciary* 1:26:15, 119th Cong. (2025) (testimony of Todd Blanche as nominee for Deputy Attorney General), <https://appropriations.house.gov/schedule/hearings/oversight-hearing-department-justice-0>.

⁹ Glenn Thrush et al., *Todd Blanche Targets Trump's Enemies Amid Jockeying to Lead Justice Dept.*, N.Y. Times (Apr. 24, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/04/24/us/politics/todd-blanche-trump-doj.html>; Paula Reid et al., *Inside Todd Blanche's audition for attorney general*, CNN (Apr. 21, 2026), <https://www.cnn.com/2026/04/21/politics/blanche-tries-deliver-weaponization-attorney-general>.

¹⁰ Monica Alba et al., *As Comey is indicted, Trump is said to be happy with acting Attorney General Blanche*, NBC News (Apr. 29, 2026), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/justice-department/comey-indicted-trump-said-happy-acting-attorney-general-blanche-rca342664>.

¹¹ Thrush, *supra* n.9.

¹² See Press Release, Dep't of Justice, Federal Grand Jury Charges Southern Poverty Law Center for Wire Fraud, False Statements, and Conspiracy to Commit Money Laundering (Apr. 21, 2026),

lawyers suggest shows “DOJ’s prosecutorial power is again being wielded for improper reasons and in service of unjust objectives.”¹³

- **Blanche oversaw and celebrated firings of career DOJ employees assigned to cases against President Trump and transferred others to a unit that DOJ alums believe may be weaponized against Trump’s enemies.** During his nomination process to be deputy attorney general, Blanche assured Congress that DOJ employees “should have no . . . fear of losing their jobs” based on their prior assigned cases, because “no agent or prosecutor will lose their job if they simply followed assigned duties.”¹⁴ Blanche has seemingly flouted this commitment. Speaking before the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) this spring, Blanche emphasized that he “represented President Trump in the Manhattan DA case and in Jack Smith’s prosecutions” and that “[t]here is not a single man or woman at the Department of Justice who had anything to do with those prosecutions” any longer.¹⁵ According to Blanche, “over 200” such employees “either left before we came in because they knew it was coming or were fired or took early retirement.”¹⁶ As a result of the agency’s politicization, since the start of the second Trump administration, the Department of Justice has lost over 6,000 years’ worth of expertise held by over 600 officials who have been fired or resigned.¹⁷

Soon after becoming acting attorney general, Blanche also announced that staff within DOJ’s Criminal Division would be moved into a new “fraud” unit led by a position that,¹⁸ according to Vice President Vance, will be “run out of the White House under the supervision” of himself and President Trump.¹⁹ DOJ veterans have criticized this plan as shifting attorneys from long-established enforcement teams and for bolstering a new unit that takes criminal referrals from the White House and may be weaponized to pursue Trump’s perceived enemies.²⁰ These shifts follow the

<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/federal-grand-jury-charges-southern-poverty-law-center-wire-fraud-false-statements-and>.

¹³ Ralph Chapoco, *Legal experts skeptical of DOJ’s criminal case against Southern Poverty Law Center*, Ala. Reflector (Apr. 23, 2026), <https://alabamareflector.com/2026/04/23/legal-experts-skeptical-of-doj-s-criminal-case-against-southern-poverty-law-center/>; Brief of Amicus Curiae Society for the Rule of Law in Support of Defendant’s Motion to Dismiss Indictment for Vindictive Prosecution at 18, *United States v. Southern Poverty Law Center*, No. 2:26-cr-00139 (M.D. Ala. filed June 4, 2026), ECF No. 55-1.

¹⁴ S. Comm. on Judiciary, 119th Cong., Questions for the Record of Todd Blanche, Nominee for Deputy Att’y Gen. 21 (Feb. 2025), https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-02-12_-_qfr_responses_-_blanche.pdf.

¹⁵ Right Side Broadcasting Network, *WATCH: Fireside Chat with Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche at CPAC 2026 – 03/26/26 2:56, 3:31* (YouTube, Mar. 26, 2026), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYwQMhXAhCc>.

¹⁶ *Id.* at 3:44.

¹⁷ See Lama Elsharif, *DOJ has lost 6,000 years of expertise because of agency politicization*, CREW (May 14, 2026), <https://www.citizensforethics.org/reports-investigations/crew-investigations/doj-has-lost-6000-years-of-expertise-because-of-agency-politicization/>.

¹⁸ See Memorandum for the Dep’t of Justice from Acting Attorney Gen. Todd Blanche (Apr. 7, 2026), <http://justice.gov/ag/media/1435311/dl?inline>.

¹⁹ The White House, *Press Briefing by Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt and the Vice President, January 8, 2026 6:28* (YouTube, Jan. 8, 2026), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_BILWX5md0.

²⁰ Ben Penn, *DOJ Moves Fraud Attorneys to New Division, Reversing Plans*, Bloomberg Law (Apr. 7, 2026), <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/us-law-week/doj-poaches-fraud-attorneys-for-new-division-in-reversal-of-plan>; Ben Penn, *New DOJ Fraud Chief Position Has Ex-Officials Questioning Motive*, Bloomberg Law (Jan. 9, 2026),

DOJ closing over 900 cases of federal program or procurement fraud and over 100 cases of health care fraud in the first six months of the Trump administration, declining about three times as many cases of major fraud against the U.S. compared to prior administrations.²¹

- **Blanche has lauded pardons and commutations for January 6 defendants and sought to purge the convictions of January 6 leaders.** In his CPAC appearance, Blanche claimed the pardons and commutations of January 6 defendants as one of DOJ's top accomplishments in the first year of the second Trump administration.²² Among the individuals pardoned were more than 600 convicted of assaulting, resisting or interfering with law enforcement.²³ Under Blanche's leadership, the DOJ went further, moving to vacate seditious conspiracy convictions of members of the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers who helped plan and execute January 6, including at least one convicted of assaulting or resisting a police officer.²⁴
- **Blanche's DOJ has provided millions in payouts to Trump allies.** Under Blanche's leadership, the DOJ has paid Trump administration allies millions through settlements of legally dubious cases. Blanche celebrated DOJ's \$1.25 million financial settlement with former Trump National Security Advisor Michael Flynn,²⁵ who pleaded guilty to and was subsequently pardoned for lying to the FBI about conversations with the then-Russian Ambassador during Trump's first presidential transition.²⁶ Blanche's DOJ also settled a lawsuit brought by former Trump campaign aide Carter Page for \$1.25 million, although both a district and appellate court had

<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/us-law-week/new-doj-fraud-chief-position-has-ex-officials-questioning-motive>; see also The Justice Department, Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche Announces Establishment of National Fraud Enforcement Division 25:55 (YouTube, Apr. 7, 2026), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKkgAjsxne1Y> (“[A]s far as whether we would take a referral from the White House . . . Yes.”).

²¹ Ken B. Morales et al., *Trump's Justice Department Dropped 23,000 Criminal Investigations in Shift to Immigration*, ProPublica (Mar. 31, 2026), <https://www.propublica.org/article/trump-doj-immigration-bondi-declinations-criminal-investigations>.

²² Right Side Broadcasting Network, *supra* n.15 at 6:41 (“[W]e have already done more in one year than any administration has ever done before. If you look at what happened to the . . . men and women convicted because of January 6th, by 5:00 p.m. on January 20th, every one of them was either pardoned or had their sentence commuted.”).

²³ Alexander Mallin, *DOJ moves to vacate convictions of Proud Boys, Oath Keepers from Jan. 6*, ABC News (Apr. 14, 2026), <https://abcnews.com/Politics/doj-moves-vacate-convictions-proud-boys-oath-keepers/story?id=132042992>.

²⁴ Reid, *supra* n.9; Jacob Rosen et al., *DOJ moves to dismiss Jan. 6 convictions against former Proud Boys and Oath Keepers, including seditious conspiracy charges*, CBS News (Apr. 15, 2026), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/doj-moves-dismiss-jan-6-convictions-proud-boys-oath-keepers-seditious-conspiracy/>.

²⁵ Right Side Broadcasting Network, *supra* n.15 at 14:11 (“[W]e were able to settle with . . . General Flynn yesterday and get him back a lot of the money that he lost.”); see also Anna Bower, *U.S. Government Agrees to \$1.25 Million Settlement in Michael Flynn Suit*, Lawfare (Apr. 17, 2026), <https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/u.s.-government-agrees-to--1.25-million-settlement-in-michael-flynn-suit>.

²⁶ Ryan J. Reilly et al., *Trump administration to pay Michael Flynn in settlement over earlier prosecution*, NBC News (Mar. 25, 2026), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/justice-department/trump-administration-pay-michael-flynn-settlement-lawsuit-rcna265203>.

already dismissed that case.²⁷ Blanche's DOJ similarly settled a lawsuit brought by conservative activist and Republican congressional candidate Mark Houck for \$1.1 million, although it had been dismissed by a court.²⁸

- Blanche has a record of defying Congress, flouting the law and attempting to hide the truth from the American people.** Under Blanche's leadership, the DOJ has repeatedly defied the law and Congress. According to former Attorney General Bondi, Blanche "was in charge of the process and the entire release of the Epstein files."²⁹ Under Blanche's leadership, DOJ seemingly ignored the December 19, 2025 deadline established by the Epstein Files Transparency Act to make all unclassified records relating to the Epstein investigation and prosecution public and then only released approximately 3.5 million pages of the over 6 million pages, plus tens of thousands of images and thousands of videos, that the department reviewed.³⁰ This handling of the files has led one Epstein victim to conclude that Blanche "has the president's best interest [at heart]. He does not have the American people's best interests at heart."³¹

Crucially, the DOJ's lack of transparency under Blanche's leadership isn't only about the Epstein files. At the White House's behest,³² the DOJ also issued an Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) opinion determining "the President need not further comply with" the Presidential Records Act (PRA). Arguing that the PRA—a nearly 50 year old piece of legislation—somehow exceeds the scope of Congress's constitutional authority,³³ the OLC opinion cleared the way for the White House to limit what text messages staff must preserve,³⁴ and implicitly condoned the Trump administration's ongoing

²⁷ Melissa Quinn et al., *Trump administration reaches \$1.25 million settlement with ex-Trump campaign adviser Carter Page*, CBS News (Apr. 22, 2026), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-administration-settlement-carter-page-ex-trump-adviser/>; *Page v. Comey*, 137 F.4th 806 (D.C. Cir. 2025) (affirming district court dismissal of Page claims as time-barred); *Page v. Comey*, 628 F. Supp. 3d 103 (D.D.C. 2022) (dismissing Page claims).

²⁸ Steve Benen, *Mark Meadows seeks reimbursement from Trump's DOJ for legal fees*, MS Now (Apr. 15, 2026), <https://www.ms.now/rachel-maddow-show/maddowblog/mark-meadows-seeks-reimbursement-from-trumps-doj-for-legal-fees>.

²⁹ H. Comm. on Oversight & Gov't Reform, 119th Cong., Interview of: Pamela J. Bondi 33 (2026), <https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Final-Bondi-Transcript.pdf>.

³⁰ See Epstein Files Transparency Act, Pub. L. No. 119-38, § 2, 139 Stat. 656 (2025); Press Release, Dep't of Justice, Department of Justice Publishes 3.5 Million Responsive Pages in Compliance with the Epstein Files Transparency Act (Jan. 30, 2026), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-announces-anti-weaponization-fund>; ABC News, *Deputy AG Blanche on Epstein files: 'We have nothing to hide'* 1:35, (YouTube, Feb. 1, 2026), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8XKpjsfkH5o>.

³¹ MeidasTouch, *LIVE: Trump CAUGHT in MORE LEAKS as White House RUNS SCARED!!! | 6/16/2026* (YouTube, June 16, 2026), <https://www.youtube.com/live/tNYnmIzIRBc>.

³² Memorandum from David Alan Warrington, Assistant to the President and Couns. to the President, Records Retention Policy After Office of Legal Counsel Finding that the Presidential Records Act is Unconstitutional (Apr. 2, 2026), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/documents/36947679-a9bc-4bfb-acad-898b4a580a01.pdf> ("Because Congress never had the Article I power to regulate the President's records in the manner contemplated by the PRA, the Office of White House Counsel asked the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel . . . to review the constitutionality of the PRA.").

³³ Constitutionality of the Presidential Records Act, 50 Op. O.L.C. __, at 1, 52 (Apr. 1, 2026), <https://perma.cc/V4M7-NQFA>.

³⁴ Warrington Memorandum, *supra* n.32.

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lax management of critical executive files.³⁵ This prompted a court to issue a preliminary injunction requiring Trump administration officials to comply with the PRA and preserve text messages pertaining to their work, based on the court's conclusion that "Congress has validly determined that [the PRA] helps to maintain" citizens' trust in government "by shining some light on the activities of the President and his aides."³⁶

Blanche's leadership of the Department of Justice to date confirms that his commitment to pleasing the president comes first. Indeed, Blanche has gone so far as to claim that President Trump's messages calling for the DOJ to prosecute his political adversaries "should make every American happy."³⁷ Americans deserve an attorney general who has the independence and objectivity to act in the people's interest alone. That is not Todd Blanche. I therefore urge all senators to reject Blanche's nomination for attorney general.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Donald K. Sherman
President & Chief Executive Officer

³⁵ See, e.g., Minh Kim, *Judge Orders White House to Preserve Officials' Text Messages*, N.Y. Times (May 20, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/05/20/us/politics/trump-court-text-messages.html>.

³⁶ *Am. Historical Ass'n v. Trump*, -- F. Supp. 3d ---, No. 26-1169, 2020 WL 1412395, at *1 (D.D.C. May 20, 2026).

³⁷ NBC News, *Extended interview: Acting AG Todd Blanche on Epstein files, Trump involvement in DOJ* 11:50, 13:53 (YouTube, Apr. 14, 2026), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1pzFUyRPQ0>.