

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

April 20, 2026

The Honorable Todd Blanche
Acting Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Acting Attorney General Blanche:

The American people deserve a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director who is temperate, steady, sober, and on the job, not someone who disappears behind locked doors when the country needs him most. For months, there has been increasingly devastating reporting—including last Friday’s article in *The Atlantic*¹—describing Director Patel as frequently intoxicated, inexplicably absent, and so unreachable that his own security detail considered breaching doors. He has made glaring missteps on high-profile investigations and repeatedly jetted off to Las Vegas while urgent work at FBI headquarters was left unattended. If even a fraction of this is true, the person leading our nation’s premier law-enforcement agency is an unacceptable national security risk, especially during a time of war when national security needs are heightened.

In light of these grave concerns, we demand that the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Justice immediately preserve all existing and future records and materials related to the incidents, allegations, and underlying events described in *The Atlantic* article and similar reporting and any related internal complaints, investigations, or discussions. At a minimum, this preservation obligation applies from January 20, 2025, to the present and covers:

- Any incident in which Director Patel was reportedly intoxicated, impaired, asleep, unresponsive, unreachable, or otherwise unable to perform the functions of his office.
- Any communications, notes, memoranda, statements, text messages, radio traffic, shift reports, or incident reports by members of Director Patel’s security detail or other FBI personnel relating to his condition, availability, or conduct.
- Any calendars, travel records, manifests, reimbursement records, scheduling records, lodging records, flight records, motorcade logs, or other documents reflecting Director Patel’s travel, including any trips to Las Vegas or other non-duty travel that overlapped with official responsibilities.
- Any records concerning Director Patel’s handling of, participation in, or absence from high-profile investigative or national security matters referenced in public reporting, including internal deliberations about delays, errors, rescheduling, or reassignment resulting from his conduct or unavailability.
- Any communications among FBI personnel, Department of Justice personnel, White House personnel, or other executive branch officials concerning Director Patel’s fitness for duty, use of alcohol, unexplained absences, poor judgment, or reliability.

¹ Sarah Fitzpatrick, *The FBI Director is MIA*, THE ATLANTIC (Apr. 17, 2026), <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/2026/04/kash-patel-fbi-director-drinking-absences/686839/>.

- Any complaints, referrals, internal ethics inquiries, Inspector General referrals, security concerns, human resources records, or disciplinary records related to the matters described above.
- Any instructions issued to personnel concerning the creation, alteration, retention, deletion, or non-retention of records relating to these matters.

This preservation request includes all attachments, drafts, handwritten notes, and associated metadata, as well as communications sent through email, text, iMessage, Signal, WhatsApp, Slack, Microsoft Teams, or any similar platform, whether transmitted on government-issued or personal devices used for official business.

Preserving federal records and safeguarding information critical to congressional oversight is a legal obligation that all Department employees, including all employees of component agencies and offices, such as the FBI, are required to meet. In accordance with federal law, all employees and officials within the Department have a legal responsibility to take measures to preserve, retain, and collect all documents, communications, and other relevant records, including electronic information and metadata that are or may be responsive to any investigation or a congressional inquiry.² This includes electronic messages sent using both official and personal accounts or devices and records created using text messages, phone-based message applications, or encryption software.³ All relevant personnel should be instructed immediately not to delete, destroy, alter, remove, backdate, overwrite, or otherwise compromise potentially responsive records.⁴

Please provide prompt written confirmation that you have issued comprehensive preservation instructions and taken all necessary steps to secure these materials.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

² See 44 U.S.C. §§ 3101-3107 (Chapter 31, Records Management by Federal Agencies); 44 U.S.C. §§ 3301-3314 (Chapter 33, Disposal of Records); and 36 C.F.R., Chapter XII, Subchapter B (Records Management).

³ See 44 U.S.C. § 2911.

⁴ See 44 U.S.C. § 3301(a)(2).