

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 6, 2025

The Honorable Harmeet Dhillon
Assistant Attorney General
Civil Rights Division
United States Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Assistant Attorney General Dhillon,

For nearly 70 years, the Civil Rights Division—the crown jewel of the Justice Department—has carried out its congressional mandate to protect Americans’ rights by enforcing federal statutes that prohibit discrimination.¹ Under your leadership, the staff of the Civil Rights Division has been decimated. What remains of the Division has gone from enforcing civil rights law passed by Congress to advancing the President’s political agenda and personal priorities.

Soon after being confirmed to lead the Division, you issued new policy directives to the Division’s sections instructing staff to “zealous[ly] and faithful[ly]”² pursue President Trump’s objectives by prioritizing the enforcement of the President’s Executive Orders and reinterpreting long-standing statutes to achieve political goals.

In response, the Division has dropped a series of long running civil rights cases, including a decades-old consent decree that enforced desegregation of a Louisiana school,³ several voting rights cases addressing racial discrimination,⁴ and a case alleging child sexual abuse by a housing provider for unaccompanied migrant children.⁵

¹ See, e.g. *United States v. Fordice*, 505 U.S. 717 (1992) (defining the legal standards for higher education desegregation); *Hispanics United of DuPage County v. Village of Addison*, 988 F. Supp. 1130 (N.D. Ill. 1997) (resolving claims that the village had violated the *Fair Housing Act* by tearing down Hispanic neighborhoods during an urban renewal program); *United States v. Sandoval Cnty.*, 797 F. Supp. 2d 1249 (D.N.M. 2011) (continuing a settlement decree from 1990 to implement a Native American Voting Rights Program designed to achieve compliance with the *Voting Rights Act*); Settlement Agreement, *United States v. Fallon*, DJ 205-46-12 (D. Nev. Feb. 3, 2015) (barring an employer from conducting medical examinations or making disability-related inquiries before a conditional offer of employment is made to applicants).

² See U.S. Senator Peter Welch, Supplemental Memo on Shifting Enforcement Priorities and Staffing Changes at the Civil Rights Division to Members of the Subcomm. on the Const., S. Judiciary Comm. (July 23, 2025), at 1.

³ See *Justice Department Dismisses Half Century Old Louisiana Consent Decree*, OFF. OF PUB. AFFS.: U.S. DEP’T OF JUST. (Apr. 29, 2025), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-dismisses-half-century-old-louisiana-consent-decree>.

⁴ See Hansi Lo Wang, *Under Trump, the Justice Department is Stepping Away from Some Voting Rights Cases*, NPR (Mar. 31, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/03/24/nx-s1-5332145/voting-rights-act-1965-justice-department>.

⁵ See *HHS, DOJ Move to End Sexual Abuse and Harassment of Unaccompanied Alien Children in Shelters Operated by Southwest Key Programs*, OFF. OF PUB. AFFS.: U.S. DEP’T OF JUST. (Mar. 12, 2025), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/hhs-doj-move-end-sexual-abuse-and-harassment-unaccompanied-alien-children-shelters-operated>.

The Division has also initiated new lawsuits—not to enforce civil rights laws but to implement the personal political priorities of the President that are not grounded in statute:

- The Division sued states under the *Civil Rights Act* for refusing to provide sensitive voter registration data to the federal government even though it has no predicate to suspect voting irregularities.⁶
- The Division brought a “pattern or practice” suit—an enforcement tool historically used to address police misconduct—against the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department in an attempt to force faster approval of concealed carry handgun permits.⁷
- The Division distorted the Supreme Court’s decision in *Students for Fair Admissions*, which ruled against race-conscious college admissions practices, to open numerous investigations of public institutions and employers for their purported “DEI” policies.⁸

In order to advance this political agenda, you have, in your own words, “cleaned house”⁹ since President Trump took office in January 2025; 368 employees—approximately 70% of the attorneys and other staff—have left the Division. As of May 2025, only two career Section Chiefs remained in their posts; the nine other Section Chiefs, as well as two dozen managers, had been removed or forced out. More than a dozen career staffers, including Section Chiefs that previously oversaw disability, voting rights, and police misconduct cases, were reassigned.¹⁰

In many sections, you have replaced experienced, nonpartisan career attorneys committed to the Division’s mission with individuals who hold questionable qualifications and have demonstrated views in conflict with the Division’s enforcement obligations. For instance:

- The Acting Chief of the Voting Section previously worked for the Public Interest Legal Foundation, a conservative legal group whose stated mission is to “fight against lawlessness in American elections.”¹¹

⁶ See *Justice Department Sues Six States For Failure to Provide Voter Registration Rolls*, U.S. DEP’T OF JUST. (Sept. 25, 2025), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-sues-six-states-failure-provide-voter-registration-rolls>.

⁷ *Civil Rights Division Files the First Department of Justice Affirmative Lawsuit in Support of Gun Owners*, U.S. DEP’T OF JUST. (Sept. 30, 2025), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/civil-rights-division-files-first-department-justice-affirmative-lawsuit-support-gun-owners>.

⁸ See Pamela Bondi, *Guidance for Recipients of Federal Funding Regarding Unlawful Discrimination* (July 29, 2025), https://www.justice.gov/ag/media/1409486/dl?inline=&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery.

⁹ U.S. Assistant Attorney General Harmeet Dhillon, *Remarks at National Conservatism Conference* (Sept. 2, 2025), C-SPAN, at 10:54, available at <https://www.c-span.org/program/public-affairs-event/us-assistant-attorney-general-harmeet-dhillon-speaks-at-national-conservatism-conference/665006>.

¹⁰ See Letter from Brian Nieves, Deputy Attorney General of the Department of Justice, to U.S. Senator Peter Welch, July 15, 2025 (U.S. Sen.); Perry Stein and Jeremy Roebuck, *Civil Rights Lawyers Leave En Masse as Justice Dept. Mission Shifts*, WASH. POST (Apr. 28, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/04/28/justice-civil-rights-harmeet-dhillon-trump/>.

¹¹ Suzanne Monyak and Ben Penn, *DOJ Fires and Reassigns Civil Rights Lawyers as New Hires Arrive*, BLOOMBERG LAW (Aug. 25, 2025), <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/us-law-week/doj-fires-and-reassigns-civil-rights-lawyers-as-new-hires-arrive>.

- Division staff removed the head of the Special Litigation Section, a career attorney, and installed as Acting Chief a retired naval lawyer lacking the experience expected for this position.¹²

There are also indications that political considerations have influenced personnel decisions in the Division:

- A lawyer with only 11 months of non-clerkship legal experience was hired as a career trial attorney in the Employment Litigation Section but was immediately detailed to the Division's leadership office in August 2025, despite an internal policy that requires three years of service in the Division to be eligible for any detail away from the employee's assigned section.¹³
- Four career attorneys were elevated to senior positions despite their lack of supervisory experience after volunteering to detail in the Division's leadership office after the President's inauguration.¹⁴ One of the attorneys, who has no management experience, was made the new Acting Chief of both the Employment Litigation and Educational Opportunities Sections.¹⁵ He filed a challenge prior to his appointment alleging that President Biden's DOJ officials and a federal workers' union unlawfully colluded in enabling the Department's divisions to unionize.¹⁶
- Two of the other attorneys, who also have no management experience, were made Deputy Assistant Attorney General and Acting Principal Deputy Chief of the Employment Litigation Section, respectively.¹⁷ The other detail volunteer was tapped to serve as Acting Chief of the Appellate Section.¹⁸ These same four attorneys were responsible for the Division's recent hiring of new attorneys.¹⁹

In September 2025, you personally solicited applications at the National Conservatism Conference, stating, "We are actually now looking to hire people to do the work that is needed to

¹² See *About*, PATRICK MCCARTHY LAW, <https://patrickmccarthylaw.com/about> (last accessed Oct. 6, 2025).

¹³ See Greta Gieseke, *LinkedIn Profile*, LINKEDIN, <https://www.linkedin.com/in/greta-gieseke-2b8220133/> (last accessed Oct. 6, 2025).

¹⁴ Ben Penn and Suzanne Monyak, *Trump DOJ Said to Unwind Apolitical Civil Rights Career Hiring*, BLOOMBERG LAW (Sept. 18, 2025), <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/us-law-week/trump-doj-said-to-unwind-apolitical-civil-rights-career-hiring>.

¹⁵ See *id.*

¹⁶ See Monyak and Penn, *supra* note 11; Nick Niedzwiadek, *Julie Su's Parting Words as Trump Returns*, POLITICO (Jan. 20, 2025), <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/weekly-shift/2025/01/20/julie-sus-parting-words-as-trump-returns-00199191>.

¹⁷ See Complaint, *United States v. Rhode Island*, No. 1:25-cv-00466 (D.R.I. Sept. 16, 2025).

¹⁸ See R. Jonas Geissler, *LinkedIn Profile*, LINKEDIN, <https://www.linkedin.com/in/r-jonas-geissler-93905a7/> (last accessed Oct. 6, 2025); Andrew Braniff, *LinkedIn Profile*, LINKEDIN, <https://www.linkedin.com/in/andrew-braniff-4401938/> (last accessed Oct. 6, 2025).

¹⁹ See Penn and Monyak, *supra* note 14.

make America great again[.]” an apparent reference to the President’s political slogan.²⁰ You and your deputy have posted similar statements soliciting applications on your social media.²¹

Eliminating nonpartisan career staff and hiring political operators in their place who will carry out the President’s political agenda is one tool by which you are weaponizing the Civil Rights Division.

In order to better understand the Civil Rights Division’s hiring process, please provide detailed answers to the following questions by October 30, 2025.

1. Are you following the 2008 recommendations regarding prohibited personnel practices issued by the DOJ Inspector General and DOJ Office of Professional Responsibility?²²
2. Please explain the hiring process for any career staff hired since January 20, 2025.
 - a. Who is overseeing the hiring of career attorneys in the Civil Rights Division?
 - b. To what extent are career officials involved in hiring decisions?
3. Please explain the hiring process for Maureen Riordan, Greta Gieseke, and Patrick McCarthy.
4. Please explain the promotion process for Jonas Geissler, Jeffrey Morrison, Andrew Braniff, and Hilary Pinion.
5. Who controls the social media accounts for yourself and Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Jesus Osete?
 - a. Who approved the social media posts described in this letter?

Sincerely,



Senator Peter Welch
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Constitution
U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary

cc: Attorney General Pamela Bondi

²⁰ U.S. Assistant Attorney General Harmeet Dhillon, *supra* note 9, at 10:38.

²¹ Harmeet Dhillon (@AAGDhillon), *Did I mention we are hiring at @CivilRights ? If you are fearless, principled, competent, have practiced law for some time, and are dedicated to enforcing our federal civil rights laws, we want YOU!*, X (formerly Twitter) (Sept. 4, 2025, 9:06 AM), <https://x.com/AAGDhillon/status/1963589605296402580>; Jesus Osete (@jesus_osete), *Looking for bold, fearless attorneys who want to fight for America. Is that you?*, <https://t.co/YuxxwabrSR>, X (formerly Twitter) (June 1, 2025, 6:05 PM), https://x.com/jesus_osete/status/1929298185408713128.

²² See U.S. Dep’t of Justice, Office of Inspector Gen. & Office of Prof’l Responsibility, *An Investigation of Allegations of Politicized Hiring and Other Improper Personnel Actions in the Civil Rights Division* (July 2008), at 64–65, <https://www.justice.gov/opr/page/file/1206591/dl?inline>.