

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

June 29, 2026

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Joseph Nocella Jr.
United States Attorney, Eastern District of New York
271 Cadman Plaza East
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Mr. Nocella:

Recent reporting indicates that senior Department of Justice officials may have intervened to kill an investigation by your office into improper payments related to President Trump's commutation of the sentence of David Gentile, less than two weeks into his seven-year sentence for his role in a \$1.6 billion scheme that defrauded thousands of everyday investors.¹ I write to request information regarding the circumstances surrounding the closure of the Eastern District of New York's investigation into potential misconduct regarding that commutation.

On November 26, President Trump commuted Mr. Gentile's sentence after he had served just twelve days. In that short time in prison, Mr. Gentile reportedly told other inmates that he had made payments of \$2.5 million or more to facilitate a commutation.² One of the reported recipients of a payment from Mr. Gentile, Reverend Frank Mann, appears to have leveraged his relationship with and access to President Trump to lobby for clemency for Mr. Gentile.

The circumstances surrounding the commutation of Mr. Gentile's sentence were sufficiently suspicious that federal prosecutors in your office reportedly opened an investigation that focused on improper payments made to secure the commutation.³ That investigation was reportedly closed after a senior official from the Department of Justice, Associate Deputy Attorney General Aakash Singh, expressed concern regarding the investigation to you.⁴

By commuting Mr. Gentile's sentence, President Trump deprived his victims of over \$15.5 million in restitution and ensured he served only twelve days of his seven-year sentence⁵ — one of the most extreme examples of how the President's disregard for the safeguards that historically

¹ Kenneth P. Vogel, Nicole Hong & William K. Rashbaum, *Trump Administration Shuttered a Criminal Probe Into Fraudster's Clemency*, N.Y. TIMES (June 21, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/06/21/us/politics/trump-fraudster-priest-investigation-brooklyn.html>.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Restitution Motion of the United States, *United States v. Gentile*, No. 21-cr-00054 (E.D.N.Y. Jun. 10, 2025), ECF No. 610, <https://www.politico.com/f/?id=0000019a-e5e8-da2c-af9f-ffe9ff0f0000>; *see also* Santul Nerkar & Kenneth P. Vogel, *Fraudster's Victims Are Seething After Trump Commuted His Sentence*, N.Y. TIMES (Dec. 12, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/12/12/nyregion/david-gentile-trump-commutation.html>.

govern the pardon process has resulted in great harm to victims, through both the loss of financial restitution and the extraordinary disrespect of seeing the president champion unrepentant criminals.

The commutation of Mr. Gentile is but one example of President Trump's unprecedented, corrupt, and self-serving abuse of the pardon power. Since providing blanket pardons to 1,270 convicted criminals who answered his call to engage in insurrection⁶ at the Capitol on January 6, 2021, including those who violently attacked law enforcement, the president has issued 121 additional acts of clemency.⁷ These have included Paul Walczak, who was sentenced to 18 months in prison for tax fraud offenses⁸ that severely harmed his employees,⁹ and who received a pardon less than one month after his mother donated \$1 million to MAGA Inc. and attended a "candlelight dinner" at Mar-a-Lago.¹⁰ Similarly, Changpeng Zhao, the founder and former CEO of Binance, paid a Trump-affiliated lobbyist almost half a million dollars to help secure a pardon,¹¹ while Binance entered into a financial partnership with World Liberty Financial, the cryptocurrency firm owned by President Trump's sons.¹² Mr. Zhao received a pardon even as reporting indicates that Binance continues to enable sanctions evasion by Iran-linked actors.¹³

President Trump has fostered a transactional, pay-to-play environment in which he grants pardons to the highest bidders and rewards political allies.¹⁴ This abuse of the pardon power profoundly undermines the rule of law—there cannot be accountability for criminal conduct if convicted criminals can escape their punishment for the right price or by hiring the right people.

⁶ As of January 6, 2025, 1,270 had been convicted. See Roger Parloff, *The High-Water Mark of the Jan. 6 Protests*, LAWFARE (Jan. 6, 2025), <https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/the-high-water-mark-of-the-jan.-6-prosecutions>. Approximately 1,583 people were arrested for alleged offenses relating to the events at the Capitol on January 6, 2021. See Max Matza, *Proud Boys and Oath Keepers among over 1,500 Capitol riot defendants pardoned by Trump*, BBC (Jan. 20, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c5y7l47xrpko>.

⁷ U.S. Dep't of Justice, *Clemency Grants by President Donald J. Trump (2025-Present)* (last visited June 25, 2026), <https://www.justice.gov/pardon/clemency-grants-president-donald-j-trump-2025-present>.

⁸ Press Release, U.S. Dep't of Justice, *Owner Of Florida Health Care Companies Sentenced for Employment Tax Crimes* (Apr. 11, 2025), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/owner-florida-health-care-companies-sentenced-employment-tax-crimes>.

⁹ Alexandra Clough, *New name, management firm for NuVista Living in Wellington*, PALM BEACH POST (May 16, 2019), <https://www.palmbeachpost.com/story/news/politics/county/2019/05/16/new-name-management-firm-for-nuvista-living-in-wellington/5143429007/>.

¹⁰ Kenneth P. Vogel, *Trump Pardoned Tax Cheat After Mother Attended \$1 Million Dinner*, N.Y. TIMES (May 27, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/27/us/politics/trump-pardon-paul-walczak-tax-crimes.html>.

¹¹ Angus Berwick, Patricia Kowsmann and Rebecca Ballhaus, *How a Billionaire Felon Boosted Trump's Crypto Company en Route to a Pardon*, WALL ST. J. (Oct. 29, 2025), <https://www.wsj.com/finance/currencies/binance-trump-crypto-pardon-cz-changpeng-zhao-1007fde9>.

¹² David Yaffe-Bellany, *Binance Gives Trump Family's Crypto Firm a Leg Up*, N.Y. TIMES (Feb. 9, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/07/business/binance-trump-crypto.html>.

¹³ Letter from Sen. Richard Blumenthal to Binance Chief Executive Officer Richard Teng (Feb. 24, 2026), <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026.02.24-Binance-Iran-Sanctions-Evasion-to-Send.pdf>.

¹⁴ See, e.g., Rebecca Ballhaus, Josh Dawsey, & C. Ryan Barber, *Inside the New Fast Track to a Presidential Pardon*, WALL ST. J. (Dec 23, 2025), <https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/trump-presidential-pardon-process-dda97c15>; see also Jeffrey Toobin, *How to Get a Pardon in Trump's Washington*, N.Y. TIMES MAG. (June 18, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/05/20/magazine/pardon-trump-washington.html>; Ruth Marcus, *Donald Trump's Pardon Economy*, NEW YORKER (Apr. 27, 2026), <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2026/05/04/donald-trumps-pardon-economy>.

The President's actions ignore the harms experienced by crime victims, nullify the dedicated work of law enforcement officers and prosecutors, and undermine the rule of law. This egregious affront to our country's founding principle of equal justice under law demands congressional scrutiny

Moreover, President Trump has recklessly flouted regulatory and policy guardrails enacted to prevent exactly these sorts of abuses. Regulations have historically required that clemency petitioners demonstrate acceptance of responsibility, remorse, and atonement in order to be considered for a presidential pardon.¹⁵ The impact of the crime upon the victim and the extent of restitution to the victim have also been significant considerations,¹⁶ evaluated in part by providing notice to the victim of the crime or crimes for which clemency is sought.¹⁷ Although President Trump is not bound by these regulations, his disregard for them speaks volumes about his motivations.

Congress and the American people deserve full and timely details of the criteria and process by which the President has issued clemency actions since the beginning of his second term. Pursuant to Articles I and V of the Constitution, Senate Resolution 94 (119th Cong.), and PSI Rule 1, the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations has opened a preliminary inquiry to examine the President's abuse of the pardon power. To assist the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations in its inquiry, please produce all records and communications related to your office's role in the issuance of a commutation for David Gentile, and the decision to close the investigation into improper payments related to that commutation. Further, please provide detailed responses to the following requests by July 10, 2026.

1. All communications between your office and officials in the offices of the Attorney General or Deputy Attorney General regarding the investigation into potential misconduct regarding David Gentile's commutation.
2. All communications between your office and the White House regarding the investigation into potential misconduct regarding David Gentile's commutation.
3. A list of all personnel in the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York who were involved in the decision to close the investigation into potential misconduct regarding David Gentile's commutation.
4. All victim impact statements referenced in the February 21, 2025 sentencing letter from federal prosecutors to Judge Kovner.¹⁸

¹⁵ U.S. Dep't of Justice, Justice Manual § 9-140.112 (C).

¹⁶ *Id.* § 9-140.112(B)-(C).

¹⁷ 28 C.F.R. pt. 1.

¹⁸ Sentencing Memorandum of the United States, *United States v. Gentile*, No. 21-cr-00054 (E.D.N.Y. Feb. 21, 2025), ECF No. 539, <https://static01.nyt.com/newsgraphics/documenttools/4ec42e53e412e0e3/c324f8f4-full.pdf>.

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Please contact the Subcommittee should you have any questions about responding to these requests. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard Blumenthal". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Richard" and last name "Blumenthal" clearly distinguishable.

Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

cc: The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations