

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 19, 2026

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

Dear Attorney General Blanche:

I write regarding the Department of Justice's plans to deploy federal election monitors during the 2026 midterm elections and to request assurances that this authority will be exercised solely to protect Americans' right to vote—not to intimidate voters, pressure election officials, or advance an unsupported political narrative about the integrity of American elections.

Federal election monitoring is an important civil-rights tool when used appropriately. The Department's own guidance states that federal observers are authorized under the Voting Rights Act to monitor procedures at polling places and ballot-counting sites in eligible jurisdictions, with the purpose of assessing compliance with federal voting-rights protections.¹

The scale and circumstances of the Department's planned 2026 operation, however, raise serious questions about whether this authority is being used consistently with that purpose. According to recent reporting, the Department is preparing as many as 1,000 election monitors for the 2026 midterms.² By comparison, the Department announced plans to monitor 86 jurisdictions across 27 states during the 2024 general election.³

The Department's actions during the 2025 election cycle provide additional reason for scrutiny. In October 2025, DOJ announced that it would deploy federal observers to six counties in California and New Jersey, including Los Angeles, Orange, Kern, Riverside, Fresno, and Passaic Counties, following requests from Republican state parties.⁴ These actions raise serious concerns that the deployment of federal monitors in politically consequential jurisdictions – particularly following partisan requests – create the appearance that the Department is using federal authority to target particular communities or voting practices.

President Trump has repeatedly advanced the false claim that the 2020 presidential election was stolen, and his Administration has continued to question the security and legitimacy of American elections. In his July 16, 2026 address, the President again cast doubt on the integrity of the 2020 election and alleged that China had obtained voter information concerning approximately 220 million Americans and sought to influence the election.⁵

There is an important distinction between acknowledging that foreign governments seek to influence American politics and claiming that those governments manipulated American votes. The U.S. intelligence community's assessment of the 2020 election found no evidence that foreign actors attempted to alter the technical aspects of the voting process, and the assessment concluded that China considered influence activities but did not undertake an operation intended to

¹ <https://www.justice.gov/crt/about-federal-observers-and-election-monitoring>

² <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/justice-department-election-monitors-midterms/>

³ <https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/justice-department-monitor-polls-27-states-compliance-federal-voting-rights-laws>

⁴ <https://apnews.com/article/doj-election-monitors-new-jersey-california-voting-30d355a9ced990218772eeff1b6642b3>

⁵ <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/fact-checking-trumps-address-on-china-the-2020-election-and-what-documents-show>

change the election's outcome.⁶ This distinction matters because the Administration is now preparing to place federal personnel inside or around polling locations at a moment when the President is once again telling Americans that their elections may be compromised by fraud and foreign interference.

If the Administration repeatedly tells the public that certain voting systems, jurisdictions, or categories of voters are vulnerable to fraud or foreign manipulation, and then sends federal personnel into those same communities on Election Day, the presence of those personnel can create an atmosphere of suspicion and intimidation—even if individual monitors follow their formal instructions. The federal government's presence at a polling place carries authority that ordinary election observers do not, and voters should never be left wondering whether exercising their right to vote has placed them under federal scrutiny.

That concern is amplified by the Department's broader election-related activities. The Justice Department has sued approximately 30 states seeking access to their unredacted voter rolls as part of its stated election-integrity efforts.⁷ As of August 2026, federal district courts had rejected the Department's efforts in roughly two dozen cases, with no judge having sided with the Administration in those cases. Yet you have publicly indicated that the Department intends to continue pursuing these records.⁸

Taken together, these actions create a troubling perception: the federal government is simultaneously seeking expansive access to Americans' voter information, challenging state election systems, and preparing to place potentially 1,000 federal monitors in communities across the country. At the same time, the President is publicly asserting that American elections are vulnerable to fraud and foreign manipulation, including alleged interference by China.

That is precisely why your Department must establish clear safeguards before Election Day. Federal election monitors should exist to protect voters from discrimination and ensure compliance with federal voting-rights laws. They should not become a mechanism for the federal government to investigate generalized allegations of fraud, reinforce unsupported claims about election manipulation, or make voters feel that they are being watched because of where they live, how they vote, or what political party they support.

Accordingly, I request that you provide answers to the following questions by no later than August 31st, 2026:

1. How many federal election monitors does the Department intend to deploy during the 2026 general election, and in how many jurisdictions?
2. What objective, nonpartisan criteria is the Department using to determine where monitors will be deployed?
3. How many jurisdictions receiving federal monitors were selected following requests from Republican or Democratic political parties, candidates, or elected officials?
4. Will the Department commit that political party affiliation, electoral competitiveness, or a jurisdiction's voting history will play no role in determining whether federal monitors are deployed?
5. What written guidance have federal monitors received concerning interactions with voters, poll workers, and election administrators?
6. Will monitors be prohibited from questioning, photographing, following, recording, or otherwise interacting with voters unless specifically authorized by federal law?

⁶ <https://www.axios.com/2021/03/16/2020-election-interference-russia-china-iran>

⁷ <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-lawsuits-state-voter-rolls-justice-department/>

⁸ <https://www.democracydocket.com/news-alerts/attorney-general-blanche-says-taking-state-voter-rolls-case-to-supreme-court-is-a-possibility>

7. What safeguards are in place to prevent the presence of federal monitors from intimidating voters or discouraging lawful participation in the electoral process?
8. Will the Department commit that election monitors will not be used to investigate generalized allegations of voter fraud or foreign interference absent specific evidence of a violation of federal law?

The Justice Department has an important role in protecting the franchise, but that role depends upon public confidence that the Department is acting impartially and according to law. That confidence is especially important now, when the President continues to promote unsupported claims about the legitimacy of past elections and to warn Americans that foreign governments have compromised our electoral system.

I urge you to ensure that federal election monitoring remains what Congress intended it to be: a tool for protecting voters from discrimination and intimidation—not a tool that itself contributes to an atmosphere of fear or suspicion at the ballot box. I look forward to your prompt response by August 31st.

Sincerely,


