

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 28, 2026

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

The Honorable Harmeet K. Dhillon
Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Blanche and Assistant Attorney General Dhillon:

We agree with United States Attorney for Wyoming Darin Smith, who recently told reporters, “[v]oters deserve absolute confidence that their ballots are secure and their voices are heard without interference.”¹ Under both Democratic and Republican administrations, the Department of Justice (DOJ) has long deployed election monitors to ensure compliance with federal voting rights laws, without incident. Yet, last month, the Republican governor of Wyoming, Mark Gordon, raised the alarm when he warned that election monitors, who arrived in Cheyenne with no advance warning, conducted themselves in an “aggressive, unexpected, and disruptive” manner.² In light of this startling report, and in order to ensure that DOJ’s election monitoring program is being used appropriately in advance of the November 2026 midterm election, we request a briefing, any relevant memoranda and training materials, and information detailing where you intend to deploy election monitors and what they will be tasked with doing.

Congress originally authorized federal election observers under the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA) in order to determine “whether persons who are entitled to vote are being permitted to vote” and “whether votes cast by persons entitled to vote are being properly tabulated.”³ These observers are non-attorneys who are recruited and supervised by the Office of Personnel Management and provide reports to DOJ’s Civil Rights Division (CRT) on activities they witness in polling places.⁴ Separately, CRT runs its own election monitoring program, using its staff of attorneys.⁵ Crucially, election monitors are required to comply with state laws regulating private election observers where they are deployed.⁶ Typically, and unlike observers who are authorized under the VRA, monitors must remain outside polling places, unless allowed inside by state or local election officials.⁷ Monitors must also notify local officials before appearing at a

¹ Adam Edelman, *Wyoming’s Republican Governor Raises Concerns Over ‘Aggressive’ DOJ Election Monitors*, NBC NEWS (Aug. 27, 2026), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2026-election/wyoming-republican-governor-concerns-aggressive-doj-election-monitors-rcna594730>.

² Tim Balk, *Wyoming Governor Objects to ‘Very Odd’ D.O.J. Election Monitoring*, N.Y. TIMES (Aug. 28, 2026), <http://nytimes.com/2026/08/28/us/politics/wyoming-governor-objects-to-very-odd-doj-election-monitoring.html>.

³ 52 USC §10305(d).

⁴ *About Federal Observers and Election Monitoring*, U.S. DEP’T OF JUSTICE CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION (updated Oct. 16, 2024), <https://www.justice.gov/crt/about-federal-observers-and-election-monitoring>.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *U.S. Department of Justice Election Monitors*, CAMPAIGN LEGAL CENTER (July 2026), <https://campaignlegal.org/sites/default/files/2026-07/DOJ%20Election%20Monitors%2C%20One-Pager%20Primer.pdf>.

⁷ *Id.*

polling site and identify themselves as DOJ employees.⁸ Monitors may only talk to voters who are leaving the polling site after they have voted and are merely allowed to observe what is happening at the polling site.⁹

This past summer, CRT deployed monitors to eight states during their primary elections, including to Wyoming for its August 18, 2026, primary.¹⁰ Governor Gordon complained about the monitors' "aggressive" and "disruptive" conduct.¹¹ These DOJ monitors demanded to interview voters and attempted to access voting machines, conduct that is completely outside their duties, which are limited to observing elections—not interfering with voters and voting equipment.¹² As Laramie County Clerk Debra Lee noted, the monitors' demands were "outside the scope of federal voting rights laws,"¹³ with the monitors reportedly seeking information on how the county acquired its new election equipment and requesting to examine the county's vote tabulators,¹⁴ matters that appear to be well beyond the monitors' appropriate scope. Governor Gordon asked Wyoming's Attorney General to investigate the monitors' conduct to determine whether they violated state law.¹⁵

It is not the job of election monitors to administer elections, assess election equipment, determine voter eligibility, or direct local election officials. In light of the DOJ's announcement that it intends to deploy an unprecedented 1,000 monitors to polling places throughout the country for the general election¹⁶ and given reporting that CRT has hired attorneys that have a history of seeking to undermine free and fair elections, including one attorney who pled guilty to two misdemeanors after he illegally accessed government election websites,¹⁷ the DOJ must demonstrate that it is not misusing its election monitoring program in any way and that its monitors are being used for appropriate purposes.

It is the duty of our Committees to ensure the integrity of federal elections, including of the DOJ's election monitoring program. Accordingly, we request that you provide a briefing for

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ Press Release, *Justice Department to Conduct Election Monitoring for Massachusetts Primary Election*, U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE (Sept. 1, 2026), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-conduct-election-monitoring-massachusetts-primary-election>; Press Release, *Justice Department to Conduct Election Monitoring in Florida and Wyoming Primary Elections*, U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE (Aug. 18, 2026), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-conduct-election-monitoring-florida-and-wyoming-primary-elections>.

¹¹ Tim Balk, *Wyoming Governor Objects to 'Very Odd' D.O.J. Election Monitoring*, N.Y. TIMES (Aug. 28, 2026), <http://nytimes.com/2026/08/28/us/politics/wyoming-governor-objects-to-very-odd-doj-election-monitoring.html>.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ Sarah N. Lynch, *Justice Department to Send a Record 1,000 Monitors to Polling Places in Midterm Elections*, CBS NEWS (Aug. 18, 2026), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/justice-department-election-monitors-midterms/>.

¹⁷ Yunior Rivas, *Exclusive: Trump DOJ Appears to Have Hired Lawyer Convicted of Hacking Election Sites to Check 'Integrity'*, DEMOCRACY DOCKET (Aug. 21, 2026), <https://www.democracymonitor.com/news-alerts/trump-doj-appears-to-have-hired-lawyer-convicted-of-hacking-election-sites/>.

us on the implementation of the election monitoring program during the 2026 election cycle. To schedule this briefing, please contact Judiciary Committee Democratic Staff no later than 5:00 p.m. on October 5, 2026.

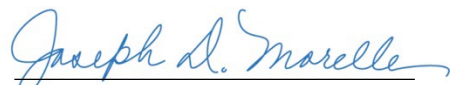
We further request that you provide the following information and materials no later than 5:00 p.m. on October 13, 2026:

1. All memoranda and correspondence on the deployment of election monitors for the 2026 primary and general elections.
2. All internal records on the selection of jurisdictions for the deployment of election monitors for the 2026 primary and general elections.
3. All internal records on the recruitment of election monitors, including qualification criteria for monitors.
4. A list of names, departments, and job titles of all election monitors who have been or will be deployed for the 2026 primary and general elections.
5. All correspondence between DOJ and jurisdictions where election monitors have been or will be deployed for the 2026 primary and general elections.
6. All training materials produced and provided to election monitors for the 2026 primary and general elections.
7. Any complaints or correspondence from public officials in jurisdictions where election monitors have been deployed in 2026 received by DOJ.

We look forward to your prompt response to our urgent and important questions and our request for a briefing.

Very truly yours,


Jamie Raskin
Ranking Member
House Committee on the Judiciary


Joseph D. Morelle
Ranking Member
Committee on House Administration

cc: The Honorable Jim Jordan, Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary

The Honorable Bryan Steil, Chairman
Committee on House Administration