

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 29, 2026

Mr. M. Sean O'Neill
Assistant Inspector General Performing the Duties of the Inspector General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Assistant Inspector General O'Neill:

We write to urgently renew requests for your office to review credible reports of Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director Kash Patel's continued misuse and mismanagement of FBI resources at the expense of the American taxpayer and ongoing Bureau operations.

Recent reports indicate that while returning to his Las Vegas home from official visits to Australia and New Zealand in August 2025, Director Patel enjoyed a stopover in Hawaii. These reports revealed that, while purportedly on official business, Director Patel participated in a VIP snorkeling excursion near the restricted USS Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor.¹

This excursion fits a broader pattern: instead of staying laser-focused on keeping Americans safe during a time of unauthorized war with Iran, persistent racially-motivated violent extremism, increasing domestic terrorism threats, and increasing concerns over cyberattacks and foreign interference, Director Patel remains focused on cultivating his personal brand² and soliciting exclusive access to VIP perks³ while saddling taxpayers with the bill for the resources his glamorous holidays require.

The role of FBI Director is a serious responsibility that requires dedication to ensuring the safety and protection of the American people. It is not a VIP pass for private excursions or taxpayer-subsidized leisure travel. For the entirety of his tenure, reports have detailed an unconscionable pattern of Director Patel taking personal privileges under the guise of government business, even at the expense of mission readiness. As Ranking Member Durbin made clear in his February 24, 2026 letter to your office about earlier reports of Director Patel's misuse and mismanagement of the FBI's Gulfstream jets for personal travel, the FBI Director is typically a designated "required use" traveler "due to their need for special protective security measures and secure communications while in flight," but "the Director's personal leisure activities and travel bucket

¹ Jim Mustian, Eric Tucker & Michael Biesecker, *Emails Show FBI Director Kash Patel's Hawaii Trip Included 'VIP Snorkel' at a Peral Harbor Memorial*, AP (May 14, 2026), <https://apnews.com/article/fbi-kash-patel-snorkel-hawaii-pearl-harbor-192a81cde7a5879aab747bc0ba4b78b9>.

² See e.g., Ken Dilanian (@KDilanianMSNOW), X.COM (Oct. 3, 2025, 9:48 AM), <https://x.com/KDilanianMSNOW/status/1974109240374484999>.

³ See Adam Goldman & Aric Toler, *A Different Kind of F.B.I. Chief: Jet-Setting Patel Loves the Limelight*, N.Y. TIMES (Apr. 20, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/20/us/politics/kash-patel-spotlight-fbi-director.html>.

list should not dictate work travel, nor should it have an impact on the Bureau's time-sensitive operations and investigations."⁴ Your office has still not responded to this letter.

These concerns are exacerbated by the continued lack of transparency regarding the planning, authorization, and purpose of activities conducted during "official" trips. Given the myriad unanswered questions about these activities, we request that you confirm that you are investigating the issues in the February 24, 2026 request and that this work includes Director Patel's trip to Hawaii sojourn in August 2025.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

cc: Senior Advisor Don R. Berthiaume
Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Department of Justice

⁴ The Honorable Richard J. Durbin, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, to Orice Williams Brown, Acting Comptroller General, U.S. Gov't Accountability Off., and Don R. Berthiaume, Acting Inspector General, U.S. Dep't of Justice (Feb. 24, 2026), available at <https://www.durbin.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/durbin-reveals-new-whistleblower-information-for-investigation-into-kash-patel-joyriding-to-the-olympics>.