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Washington, DC 20548

Acting Comptroller General
of the United States

Accessible Version

June 23, 2026

The Honorable Todd Blanche
Acting Attorney General
Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

Priority Open Recommendations: Department of Justice

Dear Acting Attorney General Blanche:

The purpose of this letter is to call your personal attention to two areas where open public recommendations to the Department of Justice (DOJ) should be given high priority.

In January 2026, we reported that, on a government-wide basis, 77 percent of our recommendations made 5 years ago were implemented.¹ DOJ's recommendation implementation rate was 95 percent. As of May 2026, DOJ has 105 open recommendations, including 18 priority recommendations.² Since our May 2025 letter, DOJ implemented three priority recommendations.³ Fully implementing the remaining recommendations could significantly improve DOJ's operations.

We are highlighting the following areas that warrant your timely and focused attention:

¹GAO, *Performance and Accountability Report, Fiscal Year 2025*, [GAO-26-900644](#) (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 29, 2026).

²GAO considers a recommendation to be a priority if when implemented, it may significantly improve government operations, for example, by realizing large dollar savings; eliminating mismanagement, fraud, and abuse; or making progress toward addressing a high-risk or duplication issue.

³GAO, *Priority Open Recommendations: Department of Justice*, [GAO-25-108009](#) (Washington, D.C.: May 2, 2025). In this letter, we identified 17 priority recommendations. Since then, in addition to the three that were implemented, we added four new priority recommendations.

- **Managing the federal prison system.** The Bureau of Prisons (BOP) is responsible for the custody, safety, and rehabilitation of approximately 155,000 incarcerated people. However, facilities are deteriorating and understaffed, putting staff and incarcerated people at risk. In addition, BOP may face increased costs by not transferring incarcerated individuals to cheaper facilities when they are eligible and incurs expenses by paying contractors late, thus owing interest penalties. We [recommended](#) that BOP take corrective action to transfer individuals on time and to address the root causes of late payments to contractors. Doing so could help ensure the successful reintegration of incarcerated people into the community and save millions of dollars in taxpayer funds.
- **Protecting national security.** The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) conducts national security-related investigations and works with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to gather, analyze, produce, and share information on emerging terrorist threats. However, the FBI and DHS have not fully assessed their existing formal agreements to determine if they articulate a joint process for working together and sharing relevant domestic terrorism related information, as we [recommended](#). Doing so would help enhance efforts to counter threats to national security.

[Managing the federal prison system](#) is also included on GAO's [High Risk List](#).⁴ Several government-wide high-risk areas have direct implications for DOJ and its operations, including [ensuring the cybersecurity of the nation](#). We also identified actions DOJ should take to reduce fragmentation, overlap, and duplication. For example, we reported that DEA and DHS's Immigration and Customs Enforcement could better manage fragmentation in their counternarcotics investigations by enhancing efforts to implement a [joint training](#) module. More information on our [Duplication and Cost Savings](#) work can be found on the GAO website.

A comprehensive list of open recommendations, including new priority recommendations, and information about their status can be found on the GAO website at [Recommendations Database | U.S. GAO](#). Copies of this letter are being sent to the appropriate congressional committees. This letter will also be available at [Priority Recommendations | U.S. GAO](#).⁵

We would welcome an opportunity to discuss how to address our open recommendations, as we pursue the shared goal of working to increase efficiency and effectiveness of government programs and spending. Please do not hesitate to contact me or Jason L. Bair, Managing Director, Homeland Security and Justice Team at BairJ@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Media Relations may be found on the last page of this letter. Thank you for your personal attention to these important issues.

Sincerely,

⁴This list identifies government operations with greater vulnerabilities to fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement. GAO, *High-Risk Series: Heightened Attention Could Save Billions More and Improve Government Efficiency and Effectiveness*, [GAO-25-107743](#) (Washington, D.C.: February 25, 2025).

⁵We also help Congress identify congressional oversight actions that can help agencies implement priority recommendations, such as incorporating them into legislation. James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, Pub. L. No. 117-263, § 7211(a)(2), 136 Stat. 2395, 3668 (2022) (codified at 31 U.S.C. § 719 note). Congress can also use its budget, appropriations, and oversight processes to incentivize executive branch agencies to act on our recommendations and monitor their progress. For example, Congress can hold hearings focused on agencies' progress in implementing priority recommendations, withhold funds when appropriate, or take other actions to provide incentives for agencies to act.

//SIGNED//

Orice Williams Brown
Acting Comptroller General
of the United States

cc: The Honorable Kash Patel, Director, FBI
Jolene Ann Lauria, Assistant Attorney General for Administration, Justice Management Division
Daren K. Margolin, Director, Executive Office for Immigration Review
Terrance C. "Terry" Cole, Administrator, DEA
Daniel Salter, Principal Deputy Administrator, DEA
Cheri Oz, Assistant Administrator, Diversion Control Division, DEA
Dr. Shantrell (Nikki) Collier, Deputy Assistant Attorney General for Information Resources
Management/Chief Information Officer
William K. Marshall III, Director, BOP
Joshua J. Smith, Deputy Director, BOP
Tammie Gregg, Acting Director, Bureau of Justice Assistance
Christopher C. Alvarez, Deputy Assistant Attorney General/Controller