

**Opening Statement of Richard Stout
Before the United States Congressional Judiciary Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight**

Good morning Chairman Drew, Ranking Member Crockett, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. It is an honor to share my perspective, drawn from nearly four decades of public service in law enforcement, national security, and counterintelligence.

My name is Richard Stout. I am a 35-year veteran of law enforcement and currently serve as the Director of Reform The Bureau, a nationwide group of former and retired FBI Special Agents committed to restoring the FBI to its core mission: protecting the public, fighting crime, and upholding the rule of law.

I took on this position with Reform The Bureau because I was frustrated and disheartened to see the FBI – the world’s most renowned and iconic law enforcement agency – fall into such disarray over the past few years.

At age 19, I became a deputy sheriff while attending college in southwest Virginia. Driven by a strong sense of duty and commitment to community safety, I went on to become a Virginia State Trooper and later a State Police Special Agent. These early roles grounded me in the foundational principles of public trust, discipline, and ethical responsibility.

In 1997, I joined the FBI as a Special Agent and was assigned to the Miami Field Office. There, I was assigned to a Colombian drug trafficking squad, where I initiated multi-jurisdictional complex investigations and was responsible for overseeing federal wiretap operations, known as Title IIIs, targeting significant DTOs.

Following the events of 9/11, I became part of a specialized team tasked with tracking the hijackers movements before their attack. Our work proved critical in tracing connections and providing timely intelligence to our federal and military partners, supporting the broader counterterrorism effort in the aftermath of the attacks.

Throughout my tenure with the FBI, I served as a case agent in several high-impact criminal investigations. Notably, I led the public corruption investigation into the Scott Rothstein Ponzi scheme—then the third-largest of its kind in United States history.

In 2005, I was deployed to Haiti as part of a team of FBI SWAT and hostage negotiators to assist in the rescue of a kidnapped 9-year-old American girl. She had been abducted from her home and was found in a remote mountainside shack, being held for ransom. This operation demonstrated the Bureau’s global reach and our unwavering commitment to safeguarding American lives abroad.

Between 2017 and 2018, I responded to two active shooter events. The first was the attack at Fort Lauderdale International Airport, where I assisted Special Agent Nicole Parker in gathering evidence. The second was far more personal. My daughter was a student at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, and was inside one of the classrooms hardest hit during the shooting. The memory of that tragedy has deeply influenced my perspective on public safety, the importance of

preparedness, and the deep concern I carry over the FBI's failure to act on two prior reports regarding the shooter's intent.

In 2018, I was part of a small team that apprehend Cesar Sayoc, who targeted high-profile Democrats and media figures with mail bombs. Internationally, I represented the FBI in coordinating with foreign partners on reintegrating deportees formerly radicalized by extremist groups. I've lectured at the International Law Enforcement Academies in Hungary and Botswana, and proudly graduated from the FBI National Academy, Session 272.

Since retiring, I've continued to serve the public through Reform the Bureau.

We at Reform The Bureau support Director Patel, AG Bondi, President Trump, and their reform minded approach to the FBI. Our intent is not to harm the Bureau, but to restore it. The stories and data we've brought forward represent deeply ingrained issues—repeatedly experienced by dedicated professionals. Our goal is not retribution, but responsibility. We must rebuild the Bureau's integrity and reorient it to serve the American people—not internal politics.

One of the areas we have been most focused on is Bureau decentralization – getting more resources and agents out of Washington and back into the field. The Director has been vocal in his support for this approach, and we applaud his efforts.

Another area is proper resource allocation – we at Reform the Bureau believe that criminal investigations have been deprioritized over the past few years in favor of those more political in nature. That must end and we trust the Director will properly allocate the resources needed to pursue, capture, and deter criminals who wish us harm.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee—our nation is at a crossroads in how we approach law enforcement, national security, and the trust placed in our federal institutions. I look forward to contributing to this important discussion and am happy to answer your questions. Thank you.