



To the Honorable Chair and Members of Judiciary Committee of the United States House of Representatives:

In May, our coalition, the Lawyer's Allied to Uphold the Rule Of Law, sent you a [letter](#) expressing our concern that actions by the Department of Justice and the present Administration have undermined our country's core constitutional commitment to the impartial administration of justice. We now submit this follow-up letter out of concern that Attorney General William Barr's continued abuse of power and subversion of the Department of Justice's mission have become a present danger to our democracy, and demand your urgent attention.

Time and again, General Barr has compromised the integrity of the Department of Justice by placing President Trump's political and personal interests above the interests of the American people in carrying out the President's orders. Rather than leading a Department of Justice that fairly enforces our nation's laws and serves the American people, General Barr has undermined the Department's mission, acting as if the President is his sole client, and the DOJ is the President's personal law firm. That General Barr has been willing to make false statements and corrupt the Department's resources in order to protect the President is deeply disturbing, and warrants intensive scrutiny by this Committee.

The recent firing of Geoffrey Berman as U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York provides a vivid example. The jurisdiction of the Southern District of New York, located in Manhattan, overlaps with (until recently) the President's state of residence, campaign headquarters, and business operations, and was the locus of activities involving the President's friends, colleagues, and in some cases adversaries. Accordingly, that office has been responsible for investigations into the Trump Organization, the President's personal lawyers, and the President's campaign finance violations. First, General Barr issued a false statement that Mr. Berman was "stepping down" from his role. Mr. Berman in fact was not, as Mr. Berman stated in a letter at that time vigorously defending his position and the integrity of the investigations his office was conducting. President Trump then fired Mr. Berman as requested by General Barr. General Barr then sent a final letter about the firing, reversing his original expressed intention to appoint a neighboring U.S. Attorney to temporarily serve and naming the Deputy U.S. Attorney to assume that position as is the usual practice.

The firing of U.S. Attorneys was consistent with this Administration's systematic firing of Inspectors General considered insufficiently deferential to the desires of the President, and of anyone who investigated Trump allies or cooperated in these investigations. The irregularities in Mr. Berman's dismissal highlights how General Barr has facilitated this

Administration's redirection of the power of government to protect the President's friends and punish his enemies. As has often been the case, no substantial reasons have been given for his removal, announced late on a Friday. Meanwhile, bipartisan officials and others already have expressed grave concern about the failure to justify recent terminations of Inspectors General who reached conclusions unpopular with this administration. General Barr's second letter to Mr. Berman states that those uncomfortable with the course of investigations undertaken after his departure may contact the appropriate Inspector General whom he, General Barr, has authorized to review such assertions. This Administration's demonstrated hostility to Inspectors General they consider "disloyal" for maintaining the independence required of that role, makes these suggestions at the least suspect.

The investigations undertaken by the U.S. Attorney's office under Mr. Berman's direction contrast sharply with General Barr's decisions to end prosecutions of foreign actors who interfered in our elections, and instead to open investigations into the United State's own intelligence community. The clear message is that anyone who fails to comply with the President's wishes risks suffering the same removal from their posts, and that the arm of government charged with implementing the rule of law will instead act in accordance with the wishes of a "ruler."

The public deserves accountability from the nation's top law enforcement official, and we remain very disturbed that Attorney General Barr has never testified before the House Judiciary Committee during his tenure despite multiple invitations and promises to do so. This rejection of public transparency and refusal to be held accountable yet again undermines the system of checks and balances designed by our Constitution. We should no longer countenance this Attorney General eroding the mechanisms that protect our national interests and that ensure America's leaders remain accountable to the same laws as its people.

As lawyers and public servants, and without regard to political or other affiliations, we thank the Committee for its focus on the abuse of power by Attorney General Barr, which we fear has endangered American citizens, the system of checks and balances, and the Rule of Law—the very essence of our democracy.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Joseph R. Grodin, Jeffrey L. Bleich, Beth Jay*

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