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American Oversight Files Lawsuit Seeking Government Records Of Trump’s Intended FBI Director Nominee Kash Patel

Documents have the potential to shed light on whether and to what extent Patel contributed to perceived or actual politicization of ODNI

American Oversight Interim Executive Director: “Before the Senate considers Patel’s nomination, the American people deserve the full picture of his actions during the first Trump administration.”

Washington D.C. — Today, American Oversight filed a [lawsuit](#) and motion for preliminary injunction in federal court, seeking records from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) involving Kash Patel, President-elect Trump’s intended nominee for FBI director.

The requested records include emails between Patel — who served as a senior adviser during the first Trump administration, later moving to the Pentagon — and former and current members of Congress, as well as records of Patel’s official government travel and communications about politicized subjects such as Trump’s baseless claims that the Obama administration had tapped his phones or the investigation into the 2019 Ukraine aid freeze.

In response to the lawsuit being filed, American Oversight interim Executive Director Chioma Chukwu released the following statement: “Patel’s nomination is powerful evidence that President-elect Trump values personal fealty over qualifications and commitment to rule of law. Any official who publishes a list of ‘enemies’ has no business heading the principal investigative arm of the Department of Justice. Before the Senate considers Patel’s nomination, the American people deserve the full picture of his actions during the first Trump administration.”

Patel’s tenure as a senior official in the first Trump administration under Acting Director Ric Grenell was marked by controversy, including [reported efforts to “clean house”](#) and politically

charged decisions, such as the declassification of records targeting political adversaries. Patel's history of promoting conspiracy theories about the 2020 election and the "deep state" raises serious concerns about his potential to undermine the independence of the FBI. He has [publicly stated plans to target critics](#) in government and media, saying, "We're going to come after you. Whether it's criminally or civilly, we'll figure that out." Patel's confirmation as FBI director would put him in charge of the federal law enforcement agency that he could direct to target his [enemies list](#) of critics and high-ranking officials.

The lawsuit seeks to uphold the public's right to access critical records concerning Patel's government actions; ODNI itself has acknowledged this urgency. These records are essential for the Senate to fulfill its advice and consent role, ensuring a legitimate confirmation process. The independence of the FBI—a cornerstone of democracy—requires that the public and Senators fully understand Patel's record before any confirmation decision is made.

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About American Oversight

American Oversight is a nonpartisan, nonprofit watchdog that advances truth, accountability, and democracy by enforcing the public's right to government records. Since their launch in March 2017, the organization has obtained and published tens of thousands of documents from federal, state, and local government agencies. Records uncovered by American Oversight have supported congressional inquiries, investigative journalism, and independent actions by partner organizations — and our work has been featured in hundreds of news stories around the country.