



U.S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Office of Congressional Affairs

Office of the Assistant Director

*935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20535-0001*

January 9, 2023

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Ranking Member Grassley:

This responds to your letter, dated November 9, 2022, to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), regarding the FBI's efforts to investigate criminal activity involving COVID-19 relief funds.

The FBI shares your emphasis on ensuring that all relevant federal agencies work together to safeguard taxpayer dollars and aggressively investigate those who used the COVID-19 pandemic to enrich themselves through fraud. As you may know, the Department of Justice (Department) established a COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force ("Task Force") to leverage a whole of government approach to protecting these relief programs. The FBI participates in the Task Force with key federal partners including representatives from the Department of Labor, the Department of the Treasury, the Internal Revenue Service, the Department of Homeland Security, the Small Business Administration, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Social Security Administration, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the Federal Housing Finance Agency, the Federal Reserve Board, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Special Inspector General for Pandemic Relief, and the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee. In short, the Task Force brought together key components of the federal government to coordinate efforts to detect and disrupt fraud, support the investigation and prosecution of the most culpable offenders, and assist in the recovery of stolen funds.

We can assure you that the FBI takes the exploitation of COVID-19 relief programs extremely seriously. The FBI alone opened more than 3,000 investigations and assessments of fraud and other crimes related to the COVID-19 pandemic from March 2020 to November 2022. Approximately 1,800 investigations and assessments remain open as of November 2022. These investigations resulted in approximately 1,100 criminal indictments and informations from March 2020 to November 2022. Approximately 650 COVID-19 related investigative matters were worked jointly with other agencies, such as the Offices of Inspector General (OIGs) associated with our federal Task Force partners. We would refer you to the Department for any information regarding prosecutorial decisions.

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Page Two

During Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, the FBI seized, forfeited, and recovered approximately \$100 million in COVID-19 relief funds. In FY 2022, the total exceeded \$110 million. Additionally, these investigations resulted in the freezing, indictment, restraint, or encumbrance (FIRE) of assets valued at approximately \$41 million in FY 2021 and \$196 million in FY 2022. These totals do not include monies individuals or corporations were ordered by a federal court to pay as restitution in connection with a criminal conviction.

The FBI takes many factors into consideration when making a determination to open an investigation, including sufficiency of the factual predication, severity of the alleged criminal conduct, prosecutorial opinion, and resource constraints. The FBI does not have sufficient resources to investigate every allegation of fraud regardless of dollar amount; instead, field offices prioritize potential investigative matters to target the worst offenders whose fraud schemes and other crimes have the greatest negative impact on the American people.

Thank you for supporting the FBI, our mission, and our people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CDunham', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Christopher G. Dunham
Acting Assistant Director

cc: The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
Chair, Senate Committee on the Judiciary