

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 11, 2026

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Pam Bondi
Attorney General
Department of Justice

Dear Attorney General Bondi:

We write to you concerning Department of Justice (DOJ) efforts to collect outstanding criminal fines and penalties. In addition to holding criminals accountable, collecting outstanding fines and penalties would allow DOJ to provide critical resources to support victims and survivors of crime nationwide, as these funds are statutorily required to be deposited into the Crime Victims Fund (CVF), with very limited exceptions.¹ Through the enactment of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) of 1984, Congress established the CVF to be self-sustaining through DOJ prosecutions of criminals, not taxpayers, by requiring “all fines that are collected from persons convicted of offenses against the United States” be deposited into the CVF.² Congress also expanded the list of criminal funds available for the CVF by enacting the VOCA Fix of 2021, which directed criminal fines and penalties from deferred and non-prosecution agreements into the CVF. Indeed, when discussing the creation of this unique funding mechanism for the CVF, Congress recognized that it was most appropriate that “[c]riminals, not innocent taxpayers, will pick up the tab for the havoc they force on victim’s lives.”³ However, in recent years, including during the Biden administration, DOJ has failed to hold up its end by ensuring the criminal fines and fees it imposes are appropriately collected and deposited into the CVF.

Chairman Grassley’s oversight exposed that the Biden administration offset more than a billion dollars in criminal fines and penalties rather than depositing them into the CVF.⁴ Since 2023, when Chairman Grassley first began investigating the Biden DOJ’s collection of criminal fines and penalties, the balance of the CVF has risen from \$1.019 billion at the end of FY 2023 to \$3.545 billion at the end of FY 2025.⁵ Further, we requested that the Government Accountability Office initiate a study to examine the administration of the CVF, which is ongoing.⁶ The DOJ Office of the Inspector General also has an ongoing audit into DOJ’s process for identifying

¹ 34 U.S. Code § 20101(b) (these limited exceptions include fines collected by Treasury to pay awards to fish and wildlife whistleblowers under the Endangered Species Act and Lacey Act Amendment, and certain fines paid to the railroad unemployment insurance account, Postal Service Fund, navigable waters revolving fund, and county public school fund.)

² *Id.*

³ 98 Cong. Rec. 23803 (Aug. 10, 1984) (statement of Senator Charles E. Grassley)
<https://www.congress.gov/98/crecb/1984/08/10/GPO-CRECB-1984-pt17-2-1.pdf>.

⁴ See Letter from Senators Charles E. Grassley, Mike Crapo, James E. Risch, and Joni K. Ernst to Attorney General Bondi, (Apr. 7, 2025) https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/grassley_to_doj_and_eousa_-_crime_victims_fund.pdf; Letter from Senators Charles E. Grassley, Mike Crapo, James E. Risch, and Joni K. Ernst to Attorney General Garland, (Jul. 2, 2024) https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/grassley_crapo_risch_and_ernst_to_doj_-_crime_victims_fund.pdf; Letter from Senator Grassley to Attorney General Garland, (Dec. 13, 2023) https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/grassley_to_doj_-_crime_victims_fund_follow_up.pdf; Letter from Senator Grassley to Attorney General Garland, (Feb. 27, 2023) https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/grassley_to_doj_-_crime_victims_fund.pdf.

⁵ *Id.*; Office for Victims of Crime, *FY 2007–2026 Crime Victims Fund End of Year Balance (\$ millions)*, (Dec. 31, 2025) <https://ovc.ojp.gov/about/crime-victims-fund/fy-2007-2026-cvf-balance.pdf>.

⁶ See Letter from Chairman Charles E. Grassley, Mike Crapo, James E. Risch, Joni K. Ernst, Susan M. Collins, and Catherine Cortez Masto to Gene Dodaro, Comptroller General, Government Accountability Office, (Sep. 9, 2024) https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/grassley_et_al_to_gao_-_cvf_study.pdf.

and directing deposits into the CVF.⁷ While the current CVF balance sits at \$3.5 billion and appears trending in the right direction, DOJ still has a lot of work to do.⁸

Specifically, there appears to be billions of dollars in outstanding criminal fines and penalties that are available for deposit into the CVF that DOJ has yet to collect. According to DOJ's Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 United States Attorney's Annual Statistical Report (the most current version), the criminal debt owed to the United States at the end of FY 24 that DOJ determined to have "collectability" **totaled almost \$10 billion.**⁹ According to reports, victim advocacy groups have been in search of additional funds to help shore up the CVF and to stave off potential cuts to the services they provide in our hometowns.¹⁰ Yet, there appears to be billions of dollars right at DOJ's fingertips that could be collected and deposited into the CVF to ensure victims and survivors of crime across our nation have sufficient resources, as Congress intended. Collecting this outstanding money must be a priority.

No later than February 25, 2026, please provide our offices with rolling updates on the status of DOJ's efforts to collect the nearly \$10 billion in outstanding criminal debts identified in the aforementioned report. Thank you for your prompt review and attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please contact Brian Randolph and Silvia Symer of Chairman Grassley's Committee staff at (202) 224-5225.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator



Mike Crapo
United States Senator



James E. Risch
United States Senator

⁷ Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General, *Audit of the U.S. Department of Justice's Processes for Identifying and Directing Deposits to the Crime Victims Fund*, <https://oig.justice.gov/ongoing-work>.

⁸ Office for Victims of Crime, *FY 2007–2026 Crime Victims Fund End of Year Balance (\$ millions)*, (Nov. 30, 2025) <https://ovc.ojp.gov/about/crime-victims-fund/fy-2007-2026-cvf-balance.pdf>.

⁹ Department of Justice, *Fiscal Year 2024 United States Attorney's Annual Statistical Report*, (last updated May 9, 2025) <https://www.justice.gov/usao/media/1399686/dl?inline> (according to the report, the total outstanding debt owed to the U.S. totaled \$40 billion and excludes criminal debts owed to third parties, which is listed in a separate table, and asset forfeitures).

¹⁰ See David Lerman, *Senators seek answers on dwindling fund for crime victims*, Roll Call (Jul. 26, 2024) <https://rollcall.com/2024/07/26/senators-seek-answers-on-dwindling-fund-for-crime-victims/>.