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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

May 27, 2026

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Todd Blanche
Acting Attorney General
Department of Justice

Dear Acting Attorney General Blanche:

On June 24, 2025, I wrote then-Attorney General Bondi concerning a 2024 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report that found widespread, extensive, decades long mismanagement and lack of oversight of the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program.¹ GAO found that many of the same issues they identified in 2009, such as lack of internal controls and no documented claim review procedures, continue to impact the PSOB program today. My letter also noted that PSOB Office leadership has remained at the helm since at least 2007, all while these deficiencies plagued the PSOB Program.² These issues have created unnecessary hardship for the families of our fallen or disabled law enforcement officers and first responders.

On October 2, 2025, I received the Justice Department's response.³ That letter stated that "OJP [Office of Justice Programs] leadership directed a comprehensive internal review of the Program to identify actionable ways to increase efficiency, reduce redundancy, improve transparency, and respond to the 2024 GAO findings." The response also noted that OJP's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) created a PSOB Data Team "solely responsible for data tasks that support the preparation of the statutorily required weekly and 180-day data reports" about PSOB claims and how long they have been pending. It further said that BJA is developing or working to improve outreach and claims assistance efforts, ensure applicants are better updated about the status of their claims, create a performance plan with outcome goals and improve PSOB data, and develop standard operating procedures to ensure consistency and effectiveness in the administration of PSOB claims. However, the Justice Department's response failed to fully provide answers to questions 2-5 of my letter. In addition, according to GAO's

¹ Letter from Senator Charles E. Grassley, Chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary to Pam Bondi, Attorney General, Department of Justice (Jun. 24, 2025) https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/grassley_to_doj_-_public_safety_officers_benefits_program.pdf.

² See Senate Committee on the Judiciary Hearing, *Justice Denied: Implementation of The Hometown Heroes Survivors Benefits Act*, Committee Report Serial No. J-110-46 (Oct. 4, 2007) <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-110shrg41157/pdf/CHRG-110shrg41157.pdf> (citing a letter signed by Hope Janke, then-Director of the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Office, denying their PSOB benefits claim, the witness testified "I must tell you, I am not only offended, but angry at this letter. I feel that the Department of Justice trivialized my husband's service, and it seems to me it was written by someone who has no idea of what it's like to respond to an emergency"); see also Bureau of Justice Assistance, *BJA Staff List*, (last visited May 27, 2026) <https://bja.ojp.gov/bio/hope-janke> (BJA website states that Hope Janke serves as Supervisory Attorney Advisor; Deputy Director, Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program).

³ Letter from the Justice Department to Senator Charles E. Grassley, Chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary (Oct. 2, 2025) (on file with Committee staff).

website, four out of five of their Recommendations remain open.⁴ One Recommendation, developing and documenting SOP's for "carrying out PSOB claims management and administrative procedures," was closed as implemented by GAO when "DOJ issued the final internal standard operating procedures in August 2025."⁵

However, my office has continued to receive complaints from PSOB claimants about processing delays and a general lack of responsiveness from the PSOB Office. Further, while the Justice Department's response says that BJA has created a Data Team "solely responsible" for publishing the statutorily required weekly and 180-day data reports on PSOB claims and processing delays, BJA hasn't published its weekly report since February 6, 2026, and its 180-day report since April 24, 2025.⁶ I led the charge in the Senate on this provision and helped get it enacted into law to increase transparency and accountability within the PSOB Program to ensure claims are processed in a timely manner.⁷ The PSOB Office's failure to publish these reports, as required by statute, appears to further demonstrate the lack of adequate management by PSOB Office leadership. In addition, while reportedly the Justice Department informed GAO that "DOJ issued the final internal standard operating procedures in August 2025," your October 2025 letter stated, "internal SOPs for carrying out PSOB claims management and administrative procedures have been drafted and are being refined to reflect recent changes to the review process."⁸ It's unclear from the Justice Department's letter what changes need to be made when the Department asserted to GAO that the procedures had been finalized months earlier. Please explain.

Finally, during the October 7, 2025, Senate Judiciary Committee Justice Department oversight hearing, I asked then-Attorney General Pam Bondi about the delays related to the processing of PSOB claims.⁹ Attorney General Bondi responded, "[p]lease reach out to us with any individual cases, and I will personally look at them for you, Chairman."¹⁰ Following the hearing, my staff provided those claims to the Justice Department. However, I've yet to receive an answer.

As I said in my June 2025 letter, our hometown heroes across our Nation put their lives and wellbeing on the line to make our communities better and safer, and we owe them and their families our gratitude, respect, and help. The continued mismanagement by the leadership of the PSOB Office has failed our law enforcement officers and first responders for far too long, and they deserve substantially better. Unless those who have been at the helm of the PSOB Office are held to account for the problems

⁴ GAO completed this work at Senator Grassley's request. Government Accountability Office, GAO-24-105549 *Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program: Transparency, Claims Assistance, and Program Management Improvements Needed* (Sept. 27, 2024) <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-24-105549>.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance, *Current PSOB Reports*, <https://bjaojp.gov/program/psob/psob-data/current-psob-reports>.

⁷ Pub. L. No: 115-36; see Press Release, *Grassley, Gillibrand Work to Ensure Families of Fallen Officers Receive Timely Claims Benefits Decisions*, (Feb. 17, 2017) <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/grassley-gillibrand-work-ensure-families-fallen-officers-receive-timely-claims>.

⁸ See Letter from the Justice Department to Senator Charles E. Grassley, Chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary (Oct. 2, 2025) (on file with Committee staff).

⁹ Senate Judiciary Committee, *Hearing: Oversight of the Department of Justice*, (Oct. 7, 2025) <https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/committee-activity/hearings/oversight-of-the-department-of-justice-10-07-2025>.

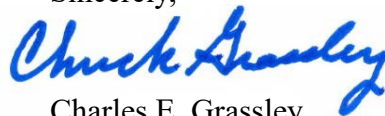
¹⁰ *Id.*

that have persisted for decades, nothing will change. Accordingly, in addition to providing responses to my unanswered questions from my June 2025 letter, please provide answers to the following questions no later than June 10, 2026.

1. Please provide an update on OJP's implementation of GAO's recommendations in its September 2024 report.
2. Please provide a copy of the PSOB Program's SOPs prior to its update in August 2025 and the final updated version the Justice Department reportedly issued in August 2025. Did OJP or the PSOB Office implement the August 2025 SOPs? Please explain in detail. Did the new SOPs referenced in the Justice Department's October 2025 letter replace the August 2025 SOPs? Please explain in detail and provide a copy of the most up to date version of the PSOB Program's SOPs.
3. What is the status of OJP leadership's comprehensive internal review of the PSOB Program? Please explain in detail and provide me with the final report, including recommendations if made.
4. My June 2025 letter noted in question four that in 2015 OJP conducted its own internal review of the PSOB Program and created a report with recommendations; however, GAO's September 2024 report stated that PSOB officials told GAO "they did not concur with or implement all of the recommendations from OJP's internal review and that they were not required to do so."¹¹ Has OJP received similar opposition from PSOB officials concerning the new OJP internal review or implementation of recommendations? If yes, provide the name(s) of the PSOB officials that believe they are not required to implement OJP recommendations and explain in detail.
5. Why has the PSOB Office failed to timely publish its weekly and 180-day PSOB claims reports and when will they be posted? Please explain in detail.
6. Do you commit to personally reviewing the PSOB claims that I provided to then-Attorney General Bondi to personally review? If not, please explain in detail. If yes, when will I receive the results of that review?

Thank you for your prompt review and responses. If you have any questions, please contact Brian Randolph and Silvia Symer on my Committee staff at (202) 224-5225.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley

Chairman

Committee on the Judiciary

¹¹ Government Accountability Office, GAO-24-105549 *Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program: Transparency, Claims Assistance, and Program Management Improvements Needed* (Sept. 27, 2024) <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-24-105549>.