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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

January 14, 2026

## VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Brooke Rollins  
 Secretary  
 Department of Agriculture

Dear Secretary Rollins:

As you are aware, public reporting has emerged regarding deplorable fraud schemes in Minnesota that deliberately targeted federal programs designed to assist children with autism,<sup>1</sup> the elderly,<sup>2</sup> and small businesses.<sup>3</sup> Testimony before Congress on January 7, 2026, has also alleged that the Walz administration retaliated against whistleblowers who tried to expose this fraud on behalf of the American people.<sup>4</sup> If true, such retaliation cannot go unpunished.

Any attempt to steal taxpayer money is utterly unacceptable; however, these crimes are especially heinous when they target programs which support Americans struggling to care for their children or elderly relatives.

On December 28, 2025, Director Patel announced that the FBI had deployed strategic personnel and resources to Minnesota.<sup>5</sup> On January 7, 2026, Attorney General Bondi announced that the Department of Justice had sent additional prosecutors to Minnesota.<sup>6</sup>

Allegations of fraud in federal programs have extended far beyond Minnesota and have raised serious questions that this criminal activity has operated on a national scale.<sup>7</sup> On January 6, 2026, the Trump HHS reportedly froze \$10 billion in federal funding for programs in Minnesota, New York, California, Illinois, and Colorado.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Justice, Press Release, *First Defendant Charged in Autism Fraud Scheme*, (Sept. 24, 2025) <https://www.justice.gov/usao-mn/pr/first-defendant-charged-autism-fraud-scheme-0>.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Justice, Press Release, *Defendants Charged in First Wave of Housing Stabilization Fraud Cases*, (Sep. 18, 2025) <https://www.justice.gov/usao-mn/pr/defendants-charged-first-wave-housing-stabilization-fraud-cases>.

<sup>3</sup> Andrew Mark Miller, FOX NEWS, *Lawmakers probe SBA loans linked to Minnesota's \$9B fraud scandal: 'Reckless decision making'*, (Dec. 23, 2025) <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/lawmakers-probe-sba-loans-linked-to-minnesotas-9b-fraud-scandal-reckless-decision-making>.

<sup>4</sup> Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Hearing, *Oversight of Fraud and Misuse of Federal Funds in Minnesota: Part I*, (Jan. 7, 2026) <https://oversight.house.gov/hearing/oversight-of-fraud-and-misuse-of-federal-funds-in-minnesota-part-i/>.

<sup>5</sup> @FBIDirectorKash, X, (Dec. 28, 2025) <https://x.com/FBIDirectorKash/status/2005305530651189719>.

<sup>6</sup> Sarah N. Lynch & Jennifer Jacobs, CBS NEWS, *Justice Dept. to surge prosecutors to Minnesota amid fraud allegations*, (Jan. 7, 2026) <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/justice-dept-surge-prosecutors-minnesota-amid-fraud-allegations/>.

<sup>7</sup> See e.g., Department of Justice, Press Release, *Two Massachusetts Men Charged with Large-Scale SNAP Benefits Trafficking*, (Dec. 17, 2025) <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ma/pr/two-massachusetts-men-charged-large-scale-snap-benefits-trafficking>; Department of Justice, Press Release, *Mississippi Businessman Pleads Guilty to \$19M Health Care Fraud Conspiracy*, (Nov. 20, 2025) <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/mississippi-businessman-pleads-guilty-19m-health-care-fraud-conspiracy>.

<sup>8</sup> Minh Kim, THE NEW YORK TIMES, *Health Dept. Freezes \$10 Billion in Funding to 5 Democratic States*, (Jan. 6, 2026) <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/06/us/politics/child-care-funding-cuts-trump.html>.

On January 8, the Trump administration announced the creation of a new division within the Department of Justice for national fraud enforcement, including the appointment of a new Assistant Attorney General responsible for prosecuting these crimes.<sup>9</sup>

On December 17, 2025, reports indicated USDA required Minnesota to conduct recertifications for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients in four counties.<sup>10</sup> This recertification process is reported to require in-person interviews to ensure that those receiving funds meet the requirements of the SNAP program.<sup>11</sup>

On January 9, 2026, you stated that the “Trump administration has uncovered . . . billions siphoned off by fraudsters” and that USDA would suspend federal financial awards to Minnesota and Minneapolis “until sufficient proof has been provided that the fraud has been stopped.”<sup>12</sup>

These are important steps to take. I encourage you to facilitate whistleblowers because in widespread fraud schemes like these, whistleblowers will be your greatest assets and allies. Should they come forward, you must protect them.

I have dedicated my career to exposing waste, fraud and abuse within government programs. I appreciate your efforts to root out waste, fraud and abuse. To better understand your agency’s efforts to safeguard the American taxpayer and to ensure the integrity of federal programs, provide answers to the following no later than January 28, 2026:

1. Reports have indicated that Minnesota SNAP outlays increased from nearly \$725 million in 2020 to nearly \$1.5 billion in 2023.<sup>13</sup> What if any, internal policies or procedures exist to alert oversight personnel for such dramatic increases? Describe in detail and provide all records.<sup>14</sup>
2. You have said that the SNAP program is “so bloated, so broken, so dysfunctional, so corrupt that it is astonishing when you dig in.”<sup>15</sup> I’ve seen fraud throughout my career and encourage you to attack it aggressively. For the taxpayer, please describe in detail why you believe this is the case and provide records which you consulted to assert this claim.

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<sup>9</sup> The White House, *Fact Sheet: President Donald J. Trump Establishes New Department of Justice Division for National Fraud Enforcement*, (Jan. 8, 2026) <https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2026/01/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-establishes-new-department-of-justice-division-for-national-fraud-enforcement/>.

<sup>10</sup> Louis Casiano, FOX NEWS, *Agriculture secretary demands Minnesota fix SNAP benefits for 4 counties immediately under pilot program*, (Dec. 17, 2025) <https://www.foxnews.com/us/agriculture-secretary-demands-minnesota-fix-snap-benefits-4-counties-immediately-under-pilot-program>.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

<sup>12</sup> @SecRollins, X, (Jan. 9, 2026) <https://x.com/SecRollins/status/2009755310718648629>.

<sup>13</sup> Representative Pam Altendorf, Minnesota Legislature, Press Release, *Rep. Altendorf: Federal Data Shows Massive Jump in SNAP Issuance in Minnesota*, (Nov. 5, 2025) <https://www.house.mn.gov/members/profile/news/15602/51398>; Representative Pam Altendorf, Minnesota Legislature, Press Release, *OH SNAP! FRAUD DISCOVERED IN FEDERAL FOOD PROGRAM, AND MINNESOTA?*, (Nov. 18, 2025) <https://www.house.mn.gov/members/profile/news/15602/51396>.

<sup>14</sup> “Records” include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (emails, email attachments, and any other electronically created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether they resulted in final documents).

<sup>15</sup> Jude Joffe-Block, NPR, *As SNAP funding lapsed, a top official called the program 'corrupt'*, (Nov. 4, 2025) <https://www.npr.org/2025/11/04/nx-s1-5595920/snap-usda-rollins-fraud>.

3. In May 2025, reports stated that USDA directed states to hand over personal data to ensure illegal immigrants did not receive taxpayer funded benefits.<sup>16</sup> How does the USDA plan to ensure compliance with this directive? How many illegal immigrants have you discovered using SNAP benefits? How much taxpayer money has been wasted? Describe in detail and provide relevant records.
4. It has been reported that the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) “mistakenly included Pandemic EBT [electronic benefit transfer] in the FNS-46 submission, which is the basis for the numbers in the SNAP State Activities report,” for 2021-2023.<sup>17</sup> What internal procedures at USDA exist to verify state reporting errors? Describe in detail and provide all records.
5. According to public reporting, fraud was also pervasive in the Federal Child Nutrition Program. For example, some grocery stores fraudulently claimed to have fed a thousand children a day, even though this was false.<sup>18</sup> How does the USDA plan to improve its oversight of Federal Child Nutrition Program funds? Describe in detail and provide all records.
6. Provide records of fraud-related training for USDA personnel between January 2020 to the present.
7. Will you commit to aiding Congress in its constitutional duty to conduct oversight by providing records relating to your fraud investigations and findings? The public has a right to know how the Department is rooting out waste, fraud, and abuse.

Thank you for your prompt review and response. If you have any questions, please contact Ross Berg or Ethan Barnes with my Committee staff at (202) 224-5225.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley  
Chairman  
Committee on the Judiciary

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<sup>16</sup> Jude Joffe-Block, NPR, *The USDA wants states to hand over food stamp data by the end of July*, (Jul. 19, 2025) <https://www.npr.org/2025/07/19/nx-s1-5471553/usda-snap-privacy-lawsuit>.

<sup>17</sup> Representative Pam Altendorf, Minnesota Legislature, Press Release, *OH SNAP! FRAUD DISCOVERED IN FEDERAL FOOD PROGRAM, AND MINNESOTA?*, (Nov. 18, 2025) <https://www.house.mn.gov/members/profile/news/15602/51396>.

<sup>18</sup> Department of Justice, Press Release, *77th Defendant Charged in Feeding Our Future Fraud Scheme*, (Nov. 20, 2025) <https://www.justice.gov/usao-mn/pr/77th-defendant-charged-feeding-our-future-fraud-scheme>; Internal Revenue Service, Press Release, *Minneapolis woman pleads guilty in \$250 million Feeding Our Future fraud scheme*, (Feb. 25, 2025) <https://www.irs.gov/compliance/criminal-investigation/minneapolis-woman-pleads-guilty-in-250-million-feeding-our-future-fraud-scheme>.