

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 11, 2026

Orice Williams Brown
Acting Comptroller General
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Acting Comptroller General Brown:

We write to ask the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to review and report to Congress about the protocols and processes that the Department of Justice (DOJ) used in reviewing, redacting, and releasing the Epstein files and the resulting failure of the Department to follow the law, respond to Congress, and protect victims.

The Epstein Files Transparency Act, which President Trump signed into law in November, required DOJ to release all unclassified records related to Epstein and his associates by December 19, 2025. The law bars redactions made “on the basis of embarrassment, reputational harm, or political sensitivity, including to any government official, public figure, or foreign dignitary,” and allows redactions only in narrow circumstances—e.g., to protect victims’ identities and privacy.

On January 30, 2026, DOJ published over three million pages and files of Epstein-related records, including more than 2,000 videos and 180,000 images. Contrary to Congress’s explicit directive to protect victims, these records included email addresses and nude photos in which the names and faces of publicly-identified and non-public victims could be identified.¹ But when it came to information identifying powerful business and political figures who are alleged co-conspirators or material witnesses, DOJ appears to have heavily redacted those records.² Since this belated and non-compliant publication, DOJ has removed thousands of records from its website—these are not merely records that inappropriately identify victims, but also those that relate to allegations against President Trump and others, with no apparent explanation.³

Despite not releasing these records by the statutory deadline, DOJ contends its document production complied with the Epstein Files Transparency Act, noting that it conducted review protocols to ensure that “redactions were [] limited to the protection of victims and their families ... Notable individuals and politicians were not redacted in the release of any files.”⁴ This is

¹ See e.g., Jessica Rawnsley, *Thousands of Epstein Documents Taken Down After Victims Identified*, BBC (Feb. 4, 2026), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn0k65pnxjxo>; MJ Lee, *Epstein Victims’ lawyers Ask Judges for Takedown of Released Files, Citing ‘Thousands of Redaction Failures’*, CNN (Feb. 2, 2026), <https://www.cnn.com/2026/02/02/politics/epstein-victims-demand-takedown-epstein-files>.

² Dareh Gregorian, *At Least Half a Dozen Top Trump Administration Officials Appear in the Jeffrey Epstein Files*, NBC NEWS (Feb. 14, 2026), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/justice-department/least-half-dozen-top-trump-administration-officials-appear-jeffrey-eps-rcna258749>.

³ Edith Olmsted, *DOJ Scrubs Records of Interviews with Trump Accuser From Epstein Files*, THE NEW REPUBLIC (Feb. 19, 2026), <https://newrepublic.com/post/206765/departement-justice-fbi-interviews-donald-trump-accuser-epstein>.

⁴ Press Release, Department of Justice Publishes 3.5 Million Responsive Pages in Compliance with the Epstein Files Transparency Act, DEP’T OF JUSTICE (Jan. 30, 2026), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/departement-justice-publishes-35-million-responsive-pages-compliance-epstein-files>.

plainly false.⁵ As Congress continues to seek justice for the victims of Epstein and his co-conspirators, GAO can offer an independent inquiry into the processes undertaken by DOJ in redacting and releasing these files—assessing DOJ’s due diligence and whether the release of these files has served to cover up child sexual abuse.

We thus ask GAO to review and report back to Congress on the following questions:

1. How many individuals did DOJ and its components task with reviewing and redacting the Epstein files for public release between the November 19, 2025 enactment of the Epstein Files Transparency Act and the December 19, 2025 production deadline set by the Act? Please disaggregate by job classification, agency, and contractor, provide the beginning and end dates, number of individuals, and total hours worked on said work.
2. How many individuals did DOJ and its components task with reviewing and redacting the Epstein files for public release the additional review period that began January 5, 2026 and ended with the January 30, 2026 production? Please disaggregate by job classification, agency, and contractor, provide the beginning and end dates, number of individuals, and total hours worked on said work.
3. How many individuals did DOJ and its components task with reviewing and redacting the Epstein files prior to the enactment of the Epstein Files Transparency Act during the review that began after Attorney General Bondi’s February 26, 2025 public announcement that “New York SDNY [was] sitting on thousands of pages of documents” and that the country would eventually see “the full Epstein files” and ended with the July 7, 2025 publication of an unsigned DOJ memorandum concluding that this review “did not uncover evidence that could predicate an investigation against uncharged third parties”?
4. Any and all guidance, written or otherwise, DOJ or other senior Trump Administration officials provided to those tasked with reviewing and redacting the Epstein files for public release from January 20, 2025 to the present.
5. Any and all specific directives given to those reviewing and redacting these files with respect to possible victims.
6. Any and all specific directives given to those reviewing and redacting these files with respect to possible abusers and co-conspirators, including any and all prominent individuals and those identified by DOJ as “politically exposed persons.”
7. Any and all specific directives given to those reviewing and redacting these files with respect to names, email addresses, or other contact information, as well as photo or video images. How did those directives differ from each other?
8. Any and all software used by DOJ to assist with the review and redaction of these files. Provide the names and the functions performed by said software.
9. Did DOJ use a contractor for any of the review or redaction? If yes, please provide the name, functions performed, and total hours worked by each contractor. What was the Administration’s review and approval process of the redactions ahead of public release?
10. Any and all political appointees with a role in the final approval of DOJ’s redactions before they were released publicly on DOJ’s website.

⁵ See Hailey Fuchs, *Lawmakers Don’t Rule Out Exposing Redacted Names of Powerful Men in Epstein Files*, POLITICO (Feb. 9, 2026), <https://www.politico.com/live-updates/2026/02/09/congress/reps-question-epstein-file-redactions-00772399>.

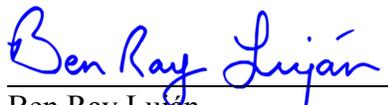
11. Any and all guidance, written or otherwise, that DOJ or other senior officials in the Trump Administration provided to those tasked with maintaining the published Epstein records regarding removing already-published records.
12. Any and all political appointees with a role in the removal process of already published Epstein records from DOJ's website?

This horrific scandal is one where powerful, wealthy men groomed, abused, and raped young women, men, and children. It is critical to understand what led to DOJ's failure to redact the victims' information and re-victimize those individuals while violating the Epstein Files Transparency Act in its redactions of information related to their alleged abusers. We appreciate your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator


Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator


Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator


Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator