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MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA**

JOSEPH KIRCHNER,

Plaintiff,

v.

KEITH ELLISON, in his official
capacity as Attorney General of the
State of Minnesota,

Defendant.

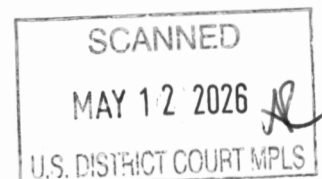
Case No. _____

26-cv-2594-JMB/DJF

**EXHIBIT C: KEITH ELLISON
CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY
MARCH 4, 2026**

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Hearing Before the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

Date: March 4, 2026

Title: Oversight of Fraud and Misuse of Federal Funds in Minnesota

Witnesses:

- **Hon. Tim Walz**, Governor, State of Minnesota
- **Hon. Keith Ellison**, Attorney General, State of Minnesota
- **Rev. Mariah Tollard**, Senior Pastor, Hamlin Church United Methodist, St. Paul, Minnesota

Committee Members Present: Chairman James Comer (R-KY), Ranking Member Robert Garcia (D-CA), Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH), Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), Rep. Tom Emmer (R-MN), Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Rep. Stephen Lynch (D-MA), Rep. Byron Donalds (R-FL), Rep. Ayanna Pressley (D-MA), Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-MI), Rep. Andy Biggs (R-AZ), Rep. Eli Crane (R-AZ), Rep. Pete Sessions (R-TX), Rep. Nancy Mace (R-SC), Rep. Chip Roy (R-TX), Rep. Michael Cloud (R-TX), Rep. Scott Perry (R-PA), Rep. William Timmons (R-SC), Rep. Rich McCormick (R-GA), Rep. Pat Fallon (R-TX), Rep. Anna Paulina Luna (R-FL), Rep. Nick Langworthy (R-NY), Rep. Mike Bost (R-IL), Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA), Rep. Lauren Boebert (R-CO), Rep. Mike Collins (R-GA), Rep. Russell Fry (R-SC), Rep. Wesley Hunt (R-TX), Rep. Harriet Hageman (R-WY), Rep. Glenn Grothman (R-WI), Rep. Gary Palmer (R-AL), Rep. Clay Higgins (R-LA), Rep. Chuck Edwards (R-NC), Rep. Brad Wenstrup (R-OH), Rep. Eric Burlison (R-MO), Rep. Derrick Van Orden (R-WI), Rep. Keith Self (R-TX), Rep. Nathaniel Moran (R-TX), Rep. William Steube (R-FL), Rep. Maxwell Frost (D-FL), Rep. Summer Lee (D-PA), Rep. Jasmine Crockett (D-TX), Rep. Dan Goldman (D-NY), Rep. Jared Moskowitz (D-FL), Rep. Becca Balint (D-VT), Rep. Greg Casar (D-TX), Rep. Melanie Stansbury (D-NM), Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA), Rep. Ted Lieu (D-CA), Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL), Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-MD), Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA), Rep. Kweisi Mfume (D-MD), Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY), Rep. Katie Porter (D-CA), Rep. Shontel Brown (D-OH), Rep. Cori Bush (D-MO), Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-CA), Rep. Brandon Gill (R-TX), Rep. Greg Murphy (R-NC), and others.

Video Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDkrid_jjXs

KEY TIMESTAMPS (YouTube Video)

Opening Statements

Timestamp	Section
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0:00	Chairman Comer's Opening Statement
5:43	Ranking Member Garcia's Opening Statement
12:21	Introduction of Witnesses
13:00	Witnesses Sworn In
13:40	Governor Walz's Opening Statement
18:03	Attorney General Ellison's Opening Statement
22:52	Reverend Tollard's Opening Statement

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Key Testimony Moments

Timestamp	Critical Statement	Speaker
19:11	"My office has limited jurisdiction over criminal matters"	AG Ellison (Opening)
20:06	"We support our 87 county attorneys in Minnesota"	AG Ellison (Opening)
41:50	Rep. Emmer quotes Ellison: "This is not a serious thing"	Rep. Emmer
42:55	Rep. Emmer quotes Ellison: "Of course I'm here to help"	Rep. Emmer
1:28:46	"If the county district attorney asks you...or if the governor asks you"	Rep. Higgins
1:29:48	"You have the authority to prosecute anything criminally that the governor asked you to"	Rep. Higgins
2:19:33	"Prosecuting Medicaid fraud is very important work that we do. We do it every single day."	AG Ellison
2:24:02	Rep. Crane quotes CNN: "This is a political matter. This is not a serious thing."	Rep. Crane
2:25:45	CNN Video Playback of Ellison's "not a serious thing" statement	Video
2:50:37	Video Playback of Ellison 2021 meeting with fraudsters	Video
2:50:58	"Walz agrees with me that this piddly stupid stuff, running small people out of business, is terrible."	AG Ellison (2021 recording)
3:30:21	"In Minnesota we have 87 county attorneys. The AG does Medicaid fraud."	AG Ellison
3:30:34	"It operates as a web together."	AG Ellison
3:55:42	Rep. Burlison quotes Ellison: "Of course I'm	Rep. Burlison

	here to help"	
3:55:48	Rep. Burlison quotes Ellison: "Let's go fight these people"	Rep. Burlison

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TRANSCRIPT

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PART I: OPENING STATEMENTS

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A. Chairman Comer's Opening Statement

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1. CHAIRMAN COMER: This committee has ever examined. Billions of taxpayer dollars were stolen from social service programs. While warnings piled up, whistleblowers spoke out, and state officials chose delay and denial over action. Federal prosecutors estimate that as much as \$9 billion may have been stolen from just 14 Medicaid programs administered by the state of Minnesota. Those programs have cost taxpayers more than \$18 billion since 2018.

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2. CHAIRMAN COMER: And investigators believe that half or more of that spending may have been lost to fraud, and that did not happen overnight. As our investigation has shown, it happened because state leadership failed repeatedly to intervene. Governor Walz has claimed his administration addressed fraud, and I quote "very early," unquote, but that claim does not hold up to the facts.

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3. CHAIRMAN COMER: His administration kept payments flowing. In January, the first hearing of this series, we heard from Minnesota State representatives who made clear this fraud was not hidden. It was known, documented, and repeatedly brought to the attention of state leadership. In case after case, state agencies identified red flags and received warnings from auditors and employees, but continued to send money out the door.

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4. CHAIRMAN COMER: Not because they lacked authority to intervene, but because they feared lawsuits, bad press and political backlash. While Governor Walz hesitated, taxpayers lost billions. Attorney General Ellison has likewise claimed his office was aggressively holding fraudsters accountable. But when his statements were tested against the record, they fell apart.

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5. CHAIRMAN COMER: In the Feeding Our Future case, Governor Walz and Attorney General Ellison publicly suggested that courts forced the state to continue payments. The judges in that case took the extraordinary step of publicly correcting them. The truth is, the state made a choice once again to keep sending the money out the door.

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1 **6. CHAIRMAN COMER:** The Feeding Our Future scandal alone involved nearly \$300
2 million stolen from programs meant to feed children during the pandemic. We're talking
3 about fake invoices, meals that never existed, luxury cars and overseas investments, all
4 paid by the American taxpayer. Today, dozens have been convicted. The fraud was real.

5 **7. CHAIRMAN COMER:** The warning signs were obvious, and state leadership failed
6 to act. The same pattern repeats across Minnesota's social services system. In the
7 childcare assistance program, providers racked up dozens and in some cases more than a
8 hundred violations and still collected millions. Facilities shut down and reopened the
9 same day under new names at the same address.

10 **8. CHAIRMAN COMER:** This went on for years. Housing stabilization services—a
11 program expected to cost \$2.6 million annually—exploded to over a hundred million
12 dollars a year. Federal prosecutors have described it as, and I quote, "easy money."
13 Providers billed services never delivered while the Walz administration failed to
14 intervene until federal agents showed up.

15 **9. CHAIRMAN COMER:** And when state employees tried to stop this, they were
16 silenced and retaliated against for even daring to notice the fraud. We have spoken with
17 over 30 whistleblowers, many of them current employees and Democrats, who say they
18 were ignored, retaliated against, and even surveilled for raising concerns. Instead of
19 protecting the whistleblowers, the Walz administration protected the system that enabled
20 the fraud.

21 **10. CHAIRMAN COMER:** We are taking oversight of fraud seriously, and today I hope
22 the Democrats will do the same, but their track record is not promising. We followed up
23 with the whistleblowers when state leaders ignored them. Republican staff spent 36 hours
24 and 46 minutes in nine transcribed interviews with current and former Minnesota state
25 officials. Democrats, however, only asked three hours and 14 minutes worth of questions.
26 That's inexcusable and frankly embarrassing.

27 **11. CHAIRMAN COMER:** Taxpayers deserve better. We are working with the Trump
28 administration, which has taken a whole of government approach to stop fraud before
29 money is stolen. What we've uncovered in Minnesota is not a paperwork error or a few
30 bad actors slipping through the cracks. It is sustained failure of leadership.

31 **12. CHAIRMAN COMER:** Governor Walz and Attorney General Ellison were warned
32 repeatedly. Auditors raised red flags. Employees sounded alarms. Invoices didn't make
33 sense. And still the money kept flowing while state officials hesitated. Billions of
34 taxpayer dollars were stolen from programs meant to serve children, the disabled, and
35 families in crisis.

36 **13. CHAIRMAN COMER:** While whistleblowers were silenced, fraudsters got rich.
37 Accountability shouldn't begin only after federal prosecutors step in and clean up the
38 damage. Accountability should compel leaders to act, and here they did not. Today, this
39 committee expects answers and we expect an explanation for why it took federal law
40 enforcement, not state leadership, to finally turn off the spigot.

1 **14. CHAIRMAN COMER:** Before we proceed, I'd like to ask unanimous consent to
 2 enter the committee's interim staff report titled "The Cost of Doing Nothing: How Tim
 3 Walz and Keith Ellison Fueled Minnesota's Fraud Explosion" into the record. Without
 4 objection. So ordered. And with that, I now yield to the ranking member Garcia for his
 5 opening statement.

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7 **B. Ranking Member Garcia's Opening Statement**

8 **15. REP. GARCIA:** Thank you, Chairman Comer. I want to thank of course the
 9 governor for being here today, the Attorney General as well. And to Reverend Mariah
 10 Tollard. Thank you so much for being here. I especially though want to thank the
 11 Minnesotans that I know have traveled here to be with us today to witness this hearing,
 12 but also in solidarity of the horrors and terrors that are happening, not just in Minnesota,
 13 but that have happened across the country.

14 **16. REP. GARCIA:** Now, we look forward to hearing directly on what life in Minnesota
 15 has been like, thanks to the Trump administration's actions. And the truth is that Donald
 16 Trump and Republicans have cut billions of dollars—billions of dollars—from healthcare
 17 and food assistance. That is a reality. Instead, with that money, they have used it to hire
 18 officers who are now terrorizing cities and killing Americans.

19 **17. REP. GARCIA:** That's where our taxpayer dollars have gone. We've taken from
 20 food assistance, we've taken from healthcare, and we've superfund terror on American
 21 streets. Now, Donald Trump has unleashed chaos against innocent Americans and across
 22 Minnesota, and we're gonna talk about that today. Terror that has actually impacted real
 23 families and kids like Liam Ramos, who have been used as we know as bait.

24 **18. REP. GARCIA:** And we all know Liam's story really well. The reality is American
 25 citizens, innocent kids, people have been brutalized and ripped away from their families.
 26 They've been thrown into detention centers with horrible conditions that people are
 27 literally dying in these centers. Peaceful Americans have been killed by federal officers
 28 and agents and labeled them as domestic terrorists or assassins by their own government.

29 **19. REP. GARCIA:** Where is the hearing and the outrage for those actions? Now, Alex
 30 Pretti, as we all know, a VA nurse, was peacefully exercising his First and Second
 31 Amendment rights when he was pepper sprayed, tackled, disarmed, and then shot
 32 repeatedly in the back. Renee Good, a mom who told an officer, and I quote, "I'm not
 33 mad at you," end quote, was shot dead just moments after.

34 **20. REP. GARCIA:** And this pattern of violence and lawlessness we've seen, of course,
 35 all over the country now. Our committee and Democrats have documented over 590 cases
 36 of suspected misconduct by President Trump and Kristi Noem's Immigration and
 37 Enforcement agents across the country, not just in Minnesota. There's been 240 incidents
 38 of violence or concerning use of force, and 181 have involved United States citizens.

1 **21. REP. GARCIA:** Now we've heard testimony that ICE training has actually
2 completely changed and now actually teaches our agents to violate the rights of American
3 citizens. That's what we're teaching now to federal agents. And this is just the tip of the
4 iceberg. DHS and ICE are out of control and must be held accountable by the Congress.

5 **22. REP. GARCIA:** Now, oversight Democrats have been partnering to hold hearings to
6 investigate these abuses, to hold DHS Secretary accountable, Steven Miller, Greg Bivino.
7 And make no mistake, this is Donald Trump's personal police and military forces
8 unleashing on American streets.

9 **23. REP. GARCIA:** Now, the hearing that we have today is gonna build on those
10 investigations. Operation Metro Surge, which we're gonna hear a lot about today. This is
11 really about not just what's happening in Minnesota through that operation, but the ways
12 that President Trump has waged his own personal war on Minnesota.

13 **24. REP. GARCIA:** Instead of improving systems—of course we're talking about fraud
14 according to our Republican colleagues—but instead of improving systems to prevent
15 future fraud, Trump's also cut off \$259 million in Medicaid funding to the state. He's
16 threatened federal food aid for 600,000 Minnesotans, including 200,000 kids.

17 **25. REP. GARCIA:** President Trump has tried to use fraud as his excuse for all of this.
18 But what's really happening is violence, terror, death, destruction, and ripping away
19 services from those that need it. You don't fight fraud by issuing presidential pardons to
20 fraudsters. You don't fight fraud from ripping away food assistance to kids.

21 **26. REP. GARCIA:** Now since his reelection, Trump has also given out jail-free cards to
22 dozens of actual real fraudsters who could get out of repaying their victims more than \$1
23 billion. Where is the fraud hearing on those abuses? And we know that you just don't
24 fight fraud by singling out states led by Democrats and ignoring states led by
25 Republicans.

26 **27. REP. GARCIA:** Every single person here, and I know the governor and the attorney
27 general believe this as well, we all wanna fight fraud, waste, and abuse in government.
28 Oklahoma, by the way, and Alabama lead the nation in SNAP fraud in Texas and Florida.
29 A Russian citizen has been arrested for submitting billions of dollars in fraud claims and
30 funneling millions overseas. Where are those hearings? Where's the Governor of
31 Oklahoma or Alabama, or Texas or Florida?

32 **28. REP. GARCIA:** I also wanna note this, because of the Trump administration's illegal
33 and unconstitutional actions, we know there is now 31 of 64—31 of 64—lawyers at the
34 Minnesota US Attorney's Office that have left. That is stunning. The lead attorney
35 responsible for pursuing these fraud cases has left because the Trump administration
36 ordered them—if we know—to investigate Renee Good's widow, not her killer. They
37 were ordered to investigate Renee Good's widow, not her killer.

38 **29. REP. GARCIA:** If the president cared at all about fraud, we would not have all of
39 these officers with all this illegal behavior on Minnesota streets. And we should

1 remember that the Trump administration tried to use Operation Metro Surge as leverage
2 to seize Minnesota's voter rolls.

3 **30. REP. GARCIA:** The Trump administration was never serious about addressing fraud
4 in Minnesota. Instead, they've been interested in election conspiracy theories and
5 terrorizing kids, and they've accused the governor and Attorney General of covering up
6 fraud only to investigate them and turn up actually no evidence. What they're trying to do
7 is convince Americans that there's a good reason for violence, for killings and for
8 violations of the law. That's not acceptable, and we're not gonna take that here today. I
9 wanna thank our witnesses again for being here, and I yield back.

10 **31. CHAIRMAN COMER:** Ranking member yields back. I'd like to welcome our
11 witnesses.

12 **C. Introduction of Witnesses**

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14 **32. CHAIRMAN COMER:** First we have Tim Walz, Governor of the State of
15 Minnesota. Governor Walz first took office in January of 2019. Next we have Keith
16 Ellison, Attorney General of the State of Minnesota. Attorney General Ellison also first
17 took office in January 2019. Finally, we have Reverend Mariah Furnace Tollard, Senior
18 Pastor, Hamlin Church United Methodist. Thank you all so much for joining us today and
19 we look forward to your testimony. Pursuant to committee Rule 9G, the witnesses will
20 please stand and raise the right hand.

21 **33. CHAIRMAN COMER:** Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you're
22 about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

23 **34. CHAIRMAN COMER:** Let the record show that the witnesses answered the
24 affirmative, and please take a seat. We appreciate you being here today and look forward
25 to your testimony. Let me remind the witnesses that we have read your written statement
26 and they will appear in full in the hearing record. Please limit your oral statements to five
27 minutes. As a reminder, please press the button on the microphone in front of you so that
28 it's on and the members can hear you when you begin to speak. The light in front of you
29 will turn green. After four minutes, the light will turn yellow. When the red light comes
30 on, your five minutes have expired, and we would ask that you please wrap up.

31 **D. Governor Walz's Opening Statement**

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33 **35. CHAIRMAN COMER:** I now recognize Governor Walz for his opening statement.

34 **36. GOV. WALZ:** Thank you, Chairman Comer, Ranking Member Garcia, members of
35 the committee. I'm proud to be here today as the governor of the great state of Minnesota.
36 Under my leadership, Minnesota has dedicated its resources to ensuring that all

1 Minnesotans can live dignified and full lives with access to top-notch public schools,
2 quality healthcare, good jobs. Thanks to these initiatives, Minnesota's been ranked as one
3 of the best states to raise a family in, one of the best states to find a job in, and one of the
4 best states to live in.

5 **37. GOV. WALZ:** Although Minnesota's programs have overwhelmingly achieved their
6 intended purposes, they're not immune from fraud. I'll be the first to acknowledge that.
7 But let me be clear. In Minnesota, if you defraud public programs, if you steal taxpayer
8 money, we'll find you, we'll prosecute you, we'll convict you, and we'll throw you in jail.

9 **38. GOV. WALZ:** In this anti-fraud mission, we keep good company across the country.
10 Our nation's governors work hard every single day to combat fraud in their programs. But
11 even as we confront issues similar to our sister states, the people of Minnesota have been
12 singled out and targeted for political retribution at an unparalleled scale, including
13 blocking Medicaid reimbursements to our state.

14 **39. GOV. WALZ:** Just last week, under the guise of combating fraud, the federal
15 government has flooded Minnesota with masked, untrained, and unaccountable agents
16 who are wreaking havoc in our communities. On the streets of Minnesota, federal agents
17 have entered US citizens' homes who have committed no crimes. They have violated the
18 constitutional rights of our citizens. They have ignored court orders. They have shot first
19 and asked questions later time and again. They have gaslit us by demanding that we
20 ignore what we see before our very eyes.

21 **40. GOV. WALZ:** But the American people are not so easily fooled. The images of this
22 brutal campaign are seared into our collective memory: the fragile innocence of the five-
23 year-old boy in a bunny hat being led away from his family; the maddening cruelty of a
24 barely clothed man—a US citizen—being dragged from his house in the dead of winter;
25 the sheer devastation we feel of seeing the lifeless bodies of Renee Good and Alex Pretti.

26 **41. GOV. WALZ:** Long after the federal government's agents of chaos pack up and
27 leave, and long after the fraudsters in whose name this hearing was supposedly called are
28 prosecuted and imprisoned, the good people of Minnesota will still be picking up the
29 pieces from the senseless acts of cruelty and violence.

30 **42. GOV. WALZ:** As we forge ahead, I hope Minnesotans will remain grounded in a
31 sense of justice, a sense of right and wrong. We know that the way to deter crime is to
32 pursue offenders regardless of who they are, not to pardon them because of who they
33 know. We understand that the key to keeping our people safe is to allow prosecutors to
34 uphold the law, not to punish them for refusing to violate it. We appreciate that public
35 trust comes from building common sense anti-fraud safeguards into our programs, not by
36 tearing down established norms.

37 **43. GOV. WALZ:** I've been invited here today to talk about how Minnesota pursues
38 these objectives, and I hope we can have a conversation about how to strengthen program
39 integrity in every state in the nation. A single taxpayer dollar wasted on fraud is a dollar
40 we can't tolerate. That's why, as governor, I have taken decisive action.

1 **44. GOV. WALZ:** I appointed a head of program integrity to oversee statewide anti-
 2 fraud efforts. I created the position of Inspector General at the Minnesota Department of
 3 Education and at the Department of Human Services. I ordered data-driven reviews and
 4 where appropriate, corrective action against providers. I've directed my administration to
 5 work with our partners in state, federal, and tribal law enforcement to make sure that
 6 fraudsters go to jail. Our cooperation with the FBI and the Department of Justice have led
 7 to serious criminal charges for over 75 individuals.

8 **45. GOV. WALZ:** Most importantly, year in and year out, and long before Minnesota
 9 programs were featured on right wing social media, I've worked with the Minnesota
 10 legislature to give state agencies the authority they need to take action based on red flags
 11 when they discover them. There's undoubtedly more to do. We'll continue to do the
 12 important work of combating fraud.

13 **46. GOV. WALZ:** But as we do so, we're gonna remain true to Minnesota principles. We
 14 will feed our hungry children. We will help the poor afford healthcare. We will assist
 15 people with disabilities while also keeping fraud in check. We'll demonstrate our
 16 decency, our integrity, and never yield to political scapegoating, particularly of our most
 17 vulnerable communities.

18 **47. GOV. WALZ:** In these extraordinarily trying times, the people of Minnesota have
 19 come together to show the world their values. I'm proud and honored to be their governor
 20 and I look forward to today's questions.

22 **E. Attorney General Ellison's Opening Statement**

23 **48. CHAIRMAN COMER:** Thank you, Governor. We now recognize Attorney General
 24 Ellison.

25 **49. AG ELLISON:** Thank you, Chairman Comer and thank you Ranking Member
 26 Garcia. And thank you to all the members of the committee. My name is Keith Ellison
 27 and I have the honor of serving as Minnesota's Attorney General. You have invited me
 28 here today to speak about a topic I feel very strongly about: fraud enforcement. I look
 29 forward to discussing the contributions of my office and the contributions we've made to
 30 fighting fraud in our state.

31 **50. AG ELLISON:** Fraud in government programs is reprehensible. It takes food from
 32 the tables of the hungry. It takes shelter from those without it. I have worked every day as
 33 Attorney General to hold fraudsters accountable, and I'm proud of our record. **We've won**
 34 **300 Medicaid fraud convictions—more than any other state of similar size—and**
 35 **recovered over \$80 million for Minnesota taxpayers.** We've returned tens of millions
 36 of dollars to victims of consumer fraud in Minnesota since 2019. Our charities division
 37 has resolved over 50 investigations and dissolved 17 sham nonprofits.

1 **51. AG ELLISON:** It's important to note that under Minnesota law, my office has
2 limited jurisdiction over criminal matters. The only kind of criminal case we can
3 prosecute all on our own is Medicaid fraud. Any other kind of criminal case must be
4 referred to us by county attorneys.

5 **52. AG ELLISON:** Still, we've punched above our weight where we do have criminal
6 jurisdiction. I'm proud of that. Over the past six years, my Medicaid fraud control unit
7 has ranked fifth in the nation in fraud convictions. Last week, I urged the state legislators
8 to pass a bipartisan Medical Assistance Protection Act, which would give us additional
9 resources to prosecute Medicaid fraudsters.

10 **53. AG ELLISON:** Where fraud occurs outside of our jurisdiction, my office has and
11 will continue assisting our local and federal partners when our help is requested. We
12 support our 87 county attorneys in Minnesota, and we regularly coordinate with federal
13 investigators and prosecutors to combat fraud. That type of collaboration between
14 enforcers at all levels of government is essential in this fight.

15 **54. AG ELLISON:** And that is why, if we are to discuss law enforcement efforts in
16 Minnesota, we cannot ignore the devastating effects of Operation Metro Surge. As you
17 know, the Trump administration, on the pretext of fighting fraud, unleashed over 3,000
18 masked armed agents on the streets of Minnesota. And as a result, two US citizens were
19 killed by federal agents—Renee Good and Alex Pretti. Federal law enforcement still
20 refuses to cooperate with us in investigating their deaths.

21 **55. AG ELLISON:** Young, innocent children were detained and traumatized. Schools
22 and businesses were forced to close, costing countless families their jobs, their
23 livelihoods, their education, and costing our state hundreds of millions of dollars in
24 economic damage. Operation Metro Surge did nothing to address fraud in our state. It
25 harmed our economy. It scarred our people. And it dealt a devastating blow to fraud
26 enforcement in Minnesota.

27 **56. AG ELLISON:** As a result of Metro Surge, federal prosecutors' efforts to fight fraud
28 in Minnesota have suffered a major setback. In the US Attorney's Office, six high ranking
29 attorneys resigned because the Department of Justice pressured them to investigate Renee
30 Good's grieving widow. Eight more prosecutors then followed. The remaining staff
31 should be spending their time prosecuting fraudsters and criminals. Instead, they are
32 drowning in immigration-related petitions resulting from Operation Metro Surge.

33 **57. AG ELLISON:** Mr. Chair, members of the committee, we cannot combat fraud
34 without consistent messaging and support from our political leaders. All sides—
35 Republicans and Democrats, the federal government and the states—must work together
36 if we are going to win the fight against those who would steal from the public. We need
37 our leaders to unite in that effort, not to use it as a political tool to score political points. I
38 stand ready and willing to work with the members of this committee to advance the cause
39 of holding fraudsters accountable. Now, more than ever, we need coordinated,
40 cooperative engagement across law enforcement if we are to achieve our goals. I look
41 forward to your questions.

F. Reverend Tollard's Opening Statement

58. CHAIRMAN COMER: Thank you, General. Now I recognize Reverend Tollard for her opening statement.

59. REV. TOLLARD: Chairman, ranking members, members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am the Reverend Mariah Tollard, and I serve as senior pastor at Hamlin Church United Methodist in St. Paul, Minnesota. I come before you today in my personal capacity as a pastor, as a citizen, as a mother, an ordinary Minnesotan who has witnessed up close the fear and harm that Operation Metro Surge has inflicted on our state.

60. REV. TOLLARD: The hearing today is about fraud in Minnesota, which is serving as a pretext for the terror the federal government has brought to the people of Minnesota. This fraud has been used as a rationale for deploying 3,000 federal immigration enforcement agents into our state in operations that target the most vulnerable among us, but are indiscriminately impacting all of us.

61. REV. TOLLARD: Let me tell you about what this looks like. Where I live, my church members have been afraid to come to worship and have even postponed funerals. An elderly Hmong man in our city—a US citizen—was taken from his home in the freezing cold, wearing only his underwear and a blanket. ICE vehicles drive recklessly through our neighborhoods in packs of four to six, stopping people of color for proof of citizenship, including a local police officer.

62. REV. TOLLARD: In St. Paul Public Schools, where my three daughters attend, nearly a quarter of students enrolled in distance learning because families were too afraid to leave their homes. My 8-year-old struggles to sleep at night because she is afraid ICE agents might break into our house. At local elementary schools in Minnesota and across the country, students are practicing drills for what to do if ICE is near their school.

63. REV. TOLLARD: Let that sit with you. American children are now practicing two kinds of drills at school: one for an active shooter and one to protect themselves from their own government. That is not security. That is a nation failing its children.

64. REV. TOLLARD: This is happening to all of our neighbors in Minnesota. Every Minnesotan has stories that will stay with you—from hearing of someone hiding in a walking cooler or the back room when ICE stormed into their workplace, to friends and family members being followed when dropping off their children at daycare.

65. REV. TOLLARD: In Minnesota, we love our neighbors. We care for one another. And because we believe that every person bears the image of God, we've built systems that reflect that belief: free meals for all children, healthcare for families who need it, schools where every kid belongs. That's what love of neighbor looks like in action.

1 **66. REV. TOLLARD:** This administration has targeted Minnesota because we live out
 2 our values of loving our neighbors. These tactics aimed at undermining those values have
 3 not succeeded. When unidentified masked agents appeared on our streets, Minnesotans
 4 put on their own uniforms, and it said "neighbor." Motivated by faith and conscience, we
 5 bought groceries for families in hiding. We paid rent. We drove children to school. We
 6 stood vigil at mosques. We served as constitutional observers. We pledged to care for
 7 children if parents were detained. We sang. We marched. We prayed.

8 **67. REV. TOLLARD:** As a pastor, I say to you, if you feel even a flicker of discomfort
 9 hearing these stories, pay attention to it. If you hear about children like Liam Ramos, if
 10 you saw the videos of the murders of Alex Pretti and Renee Good, if you know of
 11 workers arrested in the very restaurants where they serve federal agents their meals, if
 12 you understand that citizens and legal residents have been wrongfully detained, and
 13 something in you tightens, that is not partisanship. That is conscience. In my faith
 14 tradition, we call that the still quiet voice—the voice of God. It's not too late to listen, to
 15 change our minds, our hearts, and our policies.

16 **68. REV. TOLLARD:** To the members of this committee and our leaders across
 17 government: the question I leave with you is simple. What are you willing to do about it?
 18 Your silence has a cost, and it is being paid right now by children who cannot sleep,
 19 families who cannot grieve, and communities that are hollowed out.

20 **69. REV. TOLLARD:** To Americans across the country and those watching from home,
 21 and particularly to the families still too afraid to leave their houses: there are more people
 22 fighting for you than you know. Jesus teaches us in Matthew 25: "Whatever you do for
 23 the least of these, you do unto me." History will tell its story about us, but long before
 24 then, our own souls will know whether we stood with them or turned away.

25 **70. REV. TOLLARD:** No nation can build a true future on the terror of its own people.
 26 Security built on fear will shatter the first time it is tested. Only a community that
 27 chooses love of neighbor over fear will endure, and that is still within our power to
 28 become. Thank you for allowing me to share our story. I am deeply proud to be a
 29 Minnesotan.

31 **PART II: COMMITTEE MEMBER QUESTIONING**

33 **A. Rep. Jordan (R-OH) Questioning**

34 **71. REP. JORDAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Governor, why didn't you tell the truth?
 35 Why didn't you just tell the truth about the Feeding Our Future Program? This program,
 36 my understanding, received \$3 million the first year; within a couple years, was getting
 37 \$200 million of taxpayer money. Whistleblowers raised concerns, as the chairman said.

1 Auditors raised concerns. Everybody raised concerns. March 30th, 2021, the payments
2 are stopped and a little over a month later, the payments are restarted. Why didn't you tell
3 the truth about why you restarted the payments?

4 **72. GOV. WALZ:** Well, Chairman, we did tell you. Feeding Our Future grew because of
5 the pandemic. And—

6 **73. REP. JORDAN:** I didn't ask that question. I said, why didn't you tell the truth about
7 why you restarted the payments? The payments stopped 'cause there were concerns.
8 Obviously it wouldn't stop the payments then they restarted a month later. What was the
9 reason for restarting the payments?

10 **74. GOV. WALZ:** My understanding was the agency believed that the court had
11 required them to make those payments.

12 **75. REP. JORDAN:** And that was false, wasn't it? You repeated that.

13 **76. GOV. WALZ:** I think that is—

14 **77. REP. JORDAN:** You said that, didn't you? You said the reason you restarted is
15 'cause the court ordered you to do so. Is that right?

16 **78. GOV. WALZ:** I don't believe that is settled yet, to the best of my knowledge.

17 **79. REP. JORDAN:** Well, I think it is because the court did something that I just don't—
18 I don't know if I've ever seen it. They issued a statement saying you were wrong in what
19 you were saying. This is from the court. It says, *Feeding Our Future versus Minnesota*
20 *Department of Education, Correcting Reports and Statements by Governor Tim Walz*
21 *Concerning Orders Issued by the Court.*

22 **80. REP. JORDAN:** Here's what the judge says: "Governor Tim Walz told the media
23 that the Minnesota Department of Education attempted to end payments to FOF because
24 of possible fraud, but that Judge Gutman ordered payments to continue in April 2021."
25 Next sentence: "**That is false.**" So you said something that wasn't true.

26 **81. REP. JORDAN:** He further states—this is Judge Gutman—the court says this:
27 "**Judge Gutman never ordered the Department of Education to resume payments to**
28 **Feeding Our Future in April 2021 or at any other time.**" So I wanna know, why didn't
29 you tell the truth?

30 **82. GOV. WALZ:** Congressman, the attorneys at the Department of Education
31 interpreted that differently. Both of those judges are no longer on the bench, and I think
32 that interpretation—

33 **83. REP. JORDAN:** It's in the very first sentence. The first seven words. This is not
34 some unnamed source talking to the New York Times. This is not some anonymous
35 source talking to whatever—your Minnesota Star Tribune or whatever your paper is. This
36 is the court speaking. First sentence, first seven words: "Due to inaccurate statements by

1 the Governor, Ramsey County District Court Judge has issued and authorized this
2 following news release." That's pretty straightforward. So the court's lying?

3 **84. GOV. WALZ:** I can't tell you Congressman, but the interpretation—

4 **85. REP. JORDAN:** Well, somebody's lying. Somebody's lying. 'Cause you can't say the
5 court ordered you to restart the payments and then the court says, "We didn't order you to
6 restart the payments." So either you are lying or the court's lying. And I'm just asking
7 you, which one is it?

8 **86. GOV. WALZ:** I just simply know what the attorneys at the agency believed. That it
9 was a misinterpretation.

10 **87. REP. JORDAN:** Could it mean you were trying to hide behind the court, Governor?
11 Could that maybe be the reason why you issued the statements you did and why the court
12 had to do something you never see done before—they issue a press statement saying you
13 are wrong, the governor is wrong. His statement is, their words not mine, **false**. Could
14 that be the reason?

15 **88. GOV. WALZ:** That was not the interpretation of the attorneys, and courts work—
16 you can appeal those, Congressman, as you well know, but—

17 **89. REP. JORDAN:** It's all about politics, Governor.

18 **90. GOV. WALZ:** No, it's certainly—it's about taking care of our people, which
19 Minnesota does better than anyone else.

20 **91. REP. JORDAN:** These 3 million—the behavioral intervention program went from 3
21 million to 400 million in five years. The housing stabilization went from 2.6 million to
22 104 million. The integrated community supports went from 4.6 million to 170 million in
23 three years. And this is unbelievable what's happening. And you're trying to hide behind
24 some pretend court order, some court order that didn't exist.

25 **92. REP. JORDAN:** Governor, who's Casey Magan?

26 **93. GOV. WALZ:** I don't know who Casey Magan is.

27 **94. REP. JORDAN:** Well, I'll tell you. Mr. Magan is a Somali American and a fraud
28 investigator in the guy beside you's office—in the Attorney General's office. And here's
29 what he said: "There was a perception that forcefully tackling this issue might cause
30 political backlash among the Somali community, which is a core voting block." Did that
31 have anything to do with this whole fraud scheme that went on in your state, Governor?

32 **95. GOV. WALZ:** It did not, Congressman.

33 **96. REP. JORDAN:** So you're now saying Mr. Casey Magan is lying too?

34 **97. GOV. WALZ:** I'm not—you're the only one telling—you asked me a question.

1 **98. REP. JORDAN:** And I'm saying Casey Magan said—

2 **99. GOV. WALZ:** I couldn't speak for Mr. Magan.

3 **100. REP. JORDAN:** So the court's wrong and Casey Magan's wrong. You're the only
4 guy right. How many people have been indicted in your state right now? Do you know,
5 Governor?

6 **101. GOV. WALZ:** I don't have those numbers with me.

7 **102. REP. JORDAN:** You don't. 98 people have been indicted. You happen to know
8 how many are Somali American?

9 **103. GOV. WALZ:** I don't. We don't investigate or prosecute people based on ethnicity,
10 religion—

11 **104. REP. JORDAN:** Neither do I. We shouldn't do that. But Mr. Magan is a Somali
12 American who just said that one of the concerns was this is a core voting block. And I
13 just wanna know if you know how many of the 98 people who have been indicted in your
14 state are Somali?

15 **105. GOV. WALZ:** I don't. Their ethnicity is not my concern.

16 **106. REP. JORDAN:** 85. 85% of the people indicted were Somali American and a key
17 voting block. And I think that's what drove this whole thing. I yield back.

18

19 **B. Rep. Emmer (R-MN) Questioning**

20 **107. CHAIRMAN COMER:** Chair now recognizes our majority whip, Representative
21 Emmer from Minnesota.

22 **108. REP. EMMER:** Thank you, Chairman Comer. And actually thank you, Governor
23 Walz and Attorney General Ellison for appearing before the committee today.
24 Gentlemen, let's see if we can agree on at least one thing today. Today's hearing is titled
25 "Oversight of Fraud and Misuse of Federal Funds in Minnesota." Can we agree that this
26 fraud is a serious thing? Governor Walz, yes or no? Can we agree on that?

27 **109. GOV. WALZ:** Yes. Any fraud is serious.

28 **110. REP. EMMER:** Thank you. Because it's interesting—I say that you and I agree that
29 it's a serious thing—considering the man sitting next to you, your Attorney General Keith
30 Ellison, just two months ago said, quote, "**This is a political matter. This is not a**
31 **serious thing.**" End quote. Attorney General Ellison, is there an organized crime ring
32 operating in Minnesota?

33 **111. AG ELLISON:** [No response]

1 **112. REP. EMMER:** I will answer for you, sir. Governor Walz believes there is an
2 active crime ring in our state. In October, the governor said, quote, "We've got an
3 organized crime ring in Minnesota. I think it's been going on for years."

4 **113. REP. EMMER:** Moving on, Mr. Ellison, I, along with millions of Americans, have
5 grave concerns over your alleged relationships with Somali fraudsters who have since
6 been charged and convicted of federal crimes. I'm sure you are aware that over 90% of
7 the defendants charged in the Feeding Our Future fraud case are of Somali descent.

8 **114. REP. EMMER:** In fact, you have personal knowledge of these people. There's a
9 54-minute audio tape of your meeting with these criminals in December of 2021. And
10 during your meeting, they complained to you about increased scrutiny of their nonprofits
11 and you told them, quote, "**Of course, I'm here to help.**" End quote. It's on the internet.
12 Anyone can listen to you say that.

13 **115. REP. EMMER:** Since then you claim you were not aware of their crimes in the
14 \$250 million Feeding Our Future scheme, the largest pandemic fraud case in the nation.
15 But just weeks after your December 2021 meeting, the FBI executed search warrants that
16 you never would've requested in the Feeding Our Future fraud investigation.

17 **116. REP. EMMER:** Now, let's fast forward to September of 2022. Ten months after
18 you met with the Somali fraudsters, your office issued a press release stating, quote,
19 "Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison and his office have been deeply involved for
20 two years in holding Feeding Our Future accountable." End quote.

21 **117. REP. EMMER:** So, according to your office, sir, you have been deeply involved in
22 the Feeding Our Future case since September of 2020. That actually sounds like you are
23 saying that at the time of your infamous meeting with the Somali fraudsters, you were
24 already aware of the allegations of fraud. When you had this meeting in December 2021,
25 did you know, sir, about the long running FBI investigation in Feeding Our Future? Yes
26 or no?

27 **118. AG ELLISON:** Mr. Chairman, Representative Emmer—

28 **119. REP. EMMER:** Reclaiming my time. When did you personally become aware of
29 the FBI investigation? That's all I'm asking.

30 **120. AG ELLISON:** Representative Emmer, as you know, I have addressed this issue
31 many times.

32 **121. REP. EMMER:** Reclaiming my time. In that same meeting with the fraudsters, Mr.
33 Attorney General, you took aim at the Minnesota Department of Education. You stated
34 that the Minnesota Department of Education had fought the nonprofit "in very disgusting
35 ways, in a very racist, xenophobic, and Islamophobic manner." You actually asked for the
36 names of all these folks who were just hung up and offered to call the Minnesota
37 Department of Education to, quote, "demand some explanations."

1 **122. REP. EMMER:** We now know that when you made these comments, the Biden
 2 DOJ was working with the Minnesota Department of Education and that their work
 3 exposed the massive fraud ring. Pretty bad look for you, sir. Either you were oblivious to
 4 what was going on under your nose, or worse, you were trying to obstruct the work of the
 5 Minnesota Department of Education.

6 **123. REP. EMMER:** So, Mr. Chairman, we are left with two questions. One: What did
 7 Governor Walz and Keith Ellison know about the fraud? And two: When did they
 8 actually know it? I would suggest that if they do not give direct and truthful answers to
 9 both these questions at this hearing, then they both need to be put under oath in a
 10 deposition.

11 **124. REP. EMMER:** This is a serious thing, Mr. Attorney General. You are the only
 12 one who thinks protecting taxpayer dollars is political. Mr. Ellison, my concern is that
 13 you actively obstructed this investigation in exchange for campaign donations, a quid pro
 14 quo. If these concerns are proven to be true, you should be disbarred and you should go
 15 to jail. I yield back.

16

17 **C. Rep. Biggs (R-AZ) Questioning — Money Remittances Act**

18 **125. REP. BIGGS:** Mr. Ellison, isn't it true that when you were a member of Congress,
 19 you sponsored the Money Remittances Improvement Act of 2014—H.R. 4386? Do you
 20 remember that, Congressman?

21 **126. AG ELLISON:** I think that it's accurate. Yeah, I mean—we all introduced lots of
 22 bills, but—

23 **127. REP. BIGGS:** That bill's purpose was to give more authority to states to investigate
 24 remittance payments. Do you remember that?

25 **128. AG ELLISON:** Congressman, I believe that the purpose of that bill was to facilitate
 26 financial transactions for Minnesotans who needed them.

27 **129. REP. BIGGS:** Well, in reality, you shifted remittance payment investigations to the
 28 states. And that was supported by the Somali American Remittances Association. You
 29 may not remember that, but—

30 **130. AG ELLISON:** Congressman, could you remind me, did that bill ever pass?

31 **131. REP. BIGGS:** H.R. 4386—so it was supported by Somali American Remittances
 32 Association, and it was so important to you. You said, quote, "**This is a great day for**
 33 **diaspora communities around the country, including the Somalian and Hmong**
 34 **communities.**" And we know that the Somali population in Minnesota supported that
 35 bill. That bill was passed, I believe in 2014. Minnesota started identifying large numbers
 36 of remittances payments going overseas. And isn't it true that within four years of the bill

1 passing, more than \$100 million had been flown out of the Minneapolis airport by
2 Somalians? Do you know that?

3 **132. AG ELLISON:** I don't have the information on that.

4 **133. REP. BIGGS:** So, and then over the last two years, the TSA has identified over
5 \$700 million being flown out and linked to Somali travel. Are you familiar with that?

6 **134. AG ELLISON:** No, sir. I don't have the data on that.

7 **135. REP. BIGGS:** Under your tenure as the AG, the amount of remittance payments
8 going to Somalia—which by the way, some estimates as high as 40% of all Somalia's
9 GDP comes from those remittance payments—and roughly 40%, same number of 40% of
10 families in Somalia receive some benefit, economic benefit, directly from remittance
11 payments.

12 **136. REP. BIGGS:** So moving from that, do you know Selene Saeed?

13 **137. AG ELLISON:** That name is not familiar to me, sir.

14 **138. REP. BIGGS:** Yeah. Iran Mohammed?

15 **139. AG ELLISON:** No.

16 **140. REP. BIGGS:** Ab Sure Omar?

17 **141. AG ELLISON:** No.

18 **142. REP. BIGGS:** Okay. So, in 2021, you met with a group of Somali business people.
19 Those three people were there. Safari Restaurant, Partners in Quality Care—also known
20 as Partners in Nutrition. Some of their named partners and Feeding Our Future
21 representatives, including Ab Omar, who said they were having difficulties because they
22 were being investigated. And that conduct is "very racist, xenophobic, and
23 Islamophobic." Do you remember that meeting?

24 **143. AG ELLISON:** Yes, I do. And I'll tell you that these are people who were
25 fraudsters. They lied to me. They lied to the judge.

26 **144. REP. BIGGS:** Yep.

27 **145. AG ELLISON:** They lied to state agencies. And that's why we contributed to them
28 being convicted.

29 **146. REP. BIGGS:** Well, let's go on from that because you may not remember some of
30 the things you said to them specifically. And maybe we should play this video. I don't
31 know if we—do we have the video queued up?

32 **147. STAFF:** That's fine. Let's do it.

1

2

3

**D. Video Playback — Ellison Meeting with Feeding Our Future
Representatives**

4

5

148. [VIDEO - AG ELLISON speaking to group]: "You call 'em and say, 'this is not in the right format.'"

6

149. [MEETING ATTENDEES]: "Mm-hmm."

7

8

150. [VIDEO - AG ELLISON]: "'Not—you're out. You're done. Your contracts are over.'"

9

151. [MEETING ATTENDEES]: "Mm-hmm."

10

11

152. [VIDEO - AG ELLISON]: "And so this has my attention. I'm extremely frustrated by it, but we are in the middle of a battle with the agencies now."

12

153. [MEETING ATTENDEES]: "Mm-hmm."

13

14

154. [VIDEO - AG ELLISON]: "And I can tell you this: Walz agrees with me that this piddly stupid stuff, running small people out of business, is terrible."

15

155. [MEETING ATTENDEES]: "Yeah."

16

17

E. Rep. Biggs Confrontation on Campaign Donations

18

19

20

156. REP. BIGGS: Because what you thought was terrible there was that these people were being investigated for fraud. And you later took \$10,000 in campaign donations from these same individuals. Do you remember that?

21

157. AG ELLISON: I would disagree with that characterization entirely, sir.

22

23

158. REP. BIGGS: I'm sure you would, 'cause it's surely uncomfortable for you, but you took \$10,000 from those same people—

24

159. AG ELLISON: No, that's actually inaccurate.

25

160. REP. BIGGS: —that were ostensibly supposed to be investigated.

26

161. AG ELLISON: No, that's actually inaccurate.

27

162. REP. BIGGS: No, that's not inaccurate. We'll—

28

163. AG ELLISON: It is.

1 **164. REP. BIGGS:** First of all, you're entitled to say it's inaccurate, but the facts are the
2 facts.

3
4 **F. Rep. Crane (R-AZ) Questioning — CNN Interview Confrontation**

5 **165. REP. CRANE:** Thank you Chairman. Thank you to our guests for coming today. I
6 wanna start with you, Attorney General Ellison. In an interview with CNN host Laura
7 Coates, she asked you about whether or not you did enough to stop the fraud. Do you
8 remember that interview, Attorney General?

9 **166. AG ELLISON:** Congressman, I gotta admit that I don't remember the details of—

10 **167. REP. CRANE:** Can we play the video please? So, to refresh Mr. Ellison's memory,
11 are we ready to—it may take us a second on that. I'm sorry. Okay. I'll just tell you what
12 you said when she asked you if you'd done enough to stop the fraud, and she mentioned
13 the \$9 billion. You said, "**Of course we have done enough. We're doing more every**
14 **single day. This is a political matter. This is not a serious thing.**" Do you remember
15 saying that, Attorney General Ellison?

16 **168. AG ELLISON:** I remember the conversation. What I remember was that I was
17 lamenting the political—the politicized nature of this very serious problem. I—

18 **169. REP. CRANE:** Well, you said "it's not a serious thing," so now you're saying fraud
19 is a serious thing?

20 **170. AG ELLISON:** Okay, well that's politicizing—

21 **171. REP. CRANE:** That's fraud. Not CNN. Mr. Ellison, you said, "This is a political
22 matter," and this is a quote, "This is not a serious thing." So I notice you're changing your
23 tune now that you're before the House Oversight Committee.

24 **172. AG ELLISON:** I would have to disagree.

25 **173. REP. CRANE:** Do you understand, Mr. Attorney General, why this adds gasoline
26 to the fire when Americans are so frustrated with this government for their out of control
27 spending and the amount of money they pay in taxes? And then to see \$9 billion of it—an
28 estimate of \$9 billion—getting stolen of their taxpayer dollars and being used to fund cars
29 and vacations and homes and even fund terrorism. Do you understand how statements
30 like that throw gasoline on the fire, sir?

31 **174. AG ELLISON:** Congressman, I believe that you are mischaracterizing what I said,
32 so—

33 **175. REP. CRANE:** No, I actually read you the quote. I'm not mischaracterizing it at all.

34 **176. STAFF:** The video is ready, if you still want it. It's up to you.

1 **177. REP. CRANE:** Yeah, let's play it please.

2

3 **G. Video Playback — CNN Interview**

4 **178. [VIDEO - CNN HOST LAURA COATES]:** "Is that there has been hundreds of
5 millions of dollars, but now there are some estimates that there could be \$9 billion or
6 more, and no one was just suggesting they took hundreds of people off the street who
7 were involved in fraud. Are you confident your office has done enough?"

8 **179. [VIDEO - AG ELLISON]:** "Of course we've done enough and we're doing
9 more every single day. This is a political matter. This is not a serious thing."

10

11 **H. Rep. Crane Post-Video Confrontation**

12 **180. REP. CRANE:** So how, how are you gonna sit here, Attorney General, saying I'm
13 mischaracterizing—I read word for word your quote. I then showed it to the entire dais,
14 the entire audience here today. How are you gonna sit here and say that I
15 mischaracterized you?

16 **181. AG ELLISON:** Congressman, I believe you mischaracterized me because clearly
17 what I was referring to by "not serious" is that the serious issue of fraud is being
18 politicized and converted into a political weapon. That is not a serious matter in my view.
19 That is something that I believe all of us should take seriously, but we're not taking
20 seriously enough. So, sir, I would say very clearly, fraud is an odious, horrible, malignant
21 thing. And that's why it should not be turned into a political weapon. But we should come
22 together on a bipartisan—

23 **182. REP. CRANE:** The reason it's becoming political, sir, is because of statements like
24 that—when confronted with the \$9 billion of fraud in your state as the top cop in your
25 state—that you're clearly not doing enough to address.

26

27 **I. Rep. Crane Exchange with Reverend Tollard**

28 **183. REP. CRANE:** I wanna move on. Reverend Tollard, you said in your opening
29 statement that today's hearing is about fraud in Minnesota, quote unquote, "which is
30 serving as a pretext for the terror the federal government has brought to the people of
31 Minnesota. This fraud has been used as a rationale for deploying 3,000 federal immigrant
32 enforcement agents into our state." Did you say that, Reverend?

33 **184. REV. TOLLARD:** Yes.

1 **185. REP. CRANE:** This is absolutely false. These federal agents were actually brought
 2 in to the state of Minnesota for a very specific operation to remove illegal alien criminals.
 3 It wasn't because of the fraud—that's being handled under a completely different agency.
 4 ICE and everything else—that's the US District Attorney. Okay?

5 **186. REV. TOLLARD:** Did you know that the administration has linked all of these
 6 things together?

7 **187. REP. CRANE:** Well, they've linked the fact that you guys supported an open border
 8 that led in 15 to 20 million, and some of the fallout from that is fraud—like the 9 billion
 9 we're talking about today. Some of it are the rapists, the gangsters, the people that are
 10 committing fraud, they're burglarizing people, they're carjacking people. It's all kind of
 11 linked together. It's also linked to the SAVE Act, which many of you guys and my
 12 Democrat colleagues don't wanna vote for, even though 83% of Americans support it. It's
 13 all linked together. But that's not what this operation was about. So you're bearing false
 14 witness in this hearing today, because that's not what that operation was about at all.

15 **188. REV. TOLLARD:** What I'm here to talk about is the suffering of Minnesotans at
 16 the hands of federal agents, including children and their parents, and the great devastation
 17 and harm that it has caused across our state and across our wonderful communities.

18 **189. REP. CRANE:** Have you spoken out about Laken Riley or any of the American
 19 victims that have been raped, murdered, or killed by these illegal aliens, Reverend?

20 **190. REV. TOLLARD:** [No audible response]

21 **191. REP. CRANE:** I didn't think so. I yield back.
 22

23 **PART III: KEY TESTIMONY ON AG PROSECUTION AUTHORITY**

24

25 ****CRITICAL SEGMENT: AG Admits Prosecution Authority and "Web" of**
 26 **Jurisdiction****

27 **[Testimony from a Democratic Committee Member's Questioning]**

28 **192. COMMITTEE MEMBER:** So, AG Ellison, the US Attorney's Office in Minnesota
 29 has at least six prosecutors resigned due to the chaos ICE has caused. Can you briefly
 30 describe how these resignations have affected our ability to prosecute fraud?

31 **193. AG ELLISON:** Thank you, Congresswoman. And in fact, it's a great deal more
 32 than six prosecutors. It's many more than that. In fact, one of the prosecutors who
 33 resigned in protest was one of the ones who helped to lead the prosecution of the Feeding
 34 Our Future defendants. 57 have been convicted.

1 **194. AG ELLISON:** So the loss of those people is dramatically harming our effort to
 2 prosecute fraud because **in Minnesota we have 87 county attorneys. The AG does**
 3 **Medicaid fraud** and the federal government prosecutes fraud that is germane in its
 4 jurisdiction.

5 **195. AG ELLISON: It operates as a web together.** So it's not like the feds are doing it
 6 and nobody else is. They're doing the ones they're supposed to do. **We're doing the ones**
 7 **we're supposed to do** and the counties are doing the ones they're supposed to do.

8 **196. AG ELLISON:** If you take the feds out, that leaves an enormous gap and it
 9 means—and criminals are shrewd. I mean, the reality is that fraudsters are pretty smart
 10 and some of them are clever and know that if there's nobody going—if there's no federal,
 11 the prosecutor's numbers are depleted, you're going to see worse behavior.

12 **197. AG ELLISON:** And I do fear that, which is one of the reasons why **we need to**
 13 **pass stronger legislation in Minnesota to help my office prosecute** Medicaid fraud.

14 **198. COMMITTEE MEMBER:** Thank you. And there's deeper hypocrisy here...

16 **Additional Testimony on AG's Prosecution Role**

17 **[From another exchange]**

18 **199. COMMITTEE MEMBER:** Attorney General Ellison, what is your office doing
 19 systemically to prosecute fraud in the state?

20 **200. AG ELLISON:** Thank you for the question, congresswoman. **Prosecuting**
 21 **Medicaid fraud is very important work that we do. We do it every single day.** We've
 22 secured millions of dollars for people. We've gotten millions in restitution. We've
 23 convicted people and held them accountable. We also represent state agencies and help
 24 those agencies support the work that they do.

25 **201. AG ELLISON:** The fact of the matter is that the work we do to stop fraud is
 26 helping to protect public money. We're proud of it. And we also support federal
 27 prosecutions by providing them with information that they need to prosecute fraud, which
 28 we have done and will of course continue to do so.

29 **[Another exchange on AG authority]**

30 **202. REP. HIGGINS (R-LA):** I would just speculate that you have the authority. If the
 31 county district attorney asks you to get involved or if the governor asks you to get
 32 involved, then your office can take lead on any criminal investigation, specifically if you
 33 have particular staffing and capabilities within your office because it's statewide to look
 34 into organized crime. Is that not correct?

35 **203. AG ELLISON:** Okay.

1 **204. REP. HIGGINS:** So you have the authority to lead your state's effort to respond to
2 this massive fraud at the state level. From within the healthcare realm where government
3 money's being stolen at very, very high levels, unprecedented levels in your state—are
4 you leading that effort for the state of Minnesota?

5 **205. AG ELLISON:** We are leading the effort to prosecute Medicaid fraud in
6 Minnesota.

7 **206. REP. HIGGINS:** I'm not talking about Medicaid fraud. Don't hide behind that. You
8 have the authority to prosecute anything criminally that the governor asks you to.

10 **PART IV: WALZ TESTIMONY ON ADMINISTRATION AWARENESS**

11

12 **A. Rep. Donalds (R-FL) Questioning — Fraud Awareness Timeline**

13 **207. REP. DONALDS:** Governor Walz, when did you first receive notice of potential
14 fraud in Minnesota's social services programs?

15 **208. GOV. WALZ:** Social service programs in general? We knew that there was issues
16 with the CCAP program as early as 2012, and my first days in office we started taking
17 action.

18 **209. REP. DONALDS:** But as governor, when were you first notified?

19 **210. GOV. WALZ:** Before I took office.

20 **211. REP. DONALDS:** Governor Walz, former Department of Human Services
21 commissioner Tony Lourey testified that you were aware in early 2019 of fraud in two
22 Department of Human Services administered programs. Is this statement accurate?

23 **212. GOV. WALZ:** Not that I recall. I'm not sure what he's speaking about.

24 **213. REP. DONALDS:** You don't remember this meeting or this notification?

25 **214. GOV. WALZ:** No, not specifically. I don't.

26 **215. REP. DONALDS:** In March of 2019, your office of Legal Affairs reported five to 6
27 million in alleged childcare assistance program fraud. In April 2019, it was also reported
28 that the Department of Human Services lacked proper integrity controls to control fraud.
29 Were you aware of these reports?

30 **216. GOV. WALZ:** Not specific reports, but because of that, my office, we put forward
31 actions to address them starting in 2019.

1 **217. REP. DONALDS:** Is it correct that your administration was aware of the
 2 **Feeding Our Future** fraud as early as **May of 2020** based upon regular discussions
 3 about program irregularities?

4 **218. GOV. WALZ:** I believe that's correct with the agency, the Department of
 5 Education. And then going back to USDA—

6 **219. REP. DONALDS:** Was your office notified of these fraud allegations?

7 **220. GOV. WALZ:** Not me specifically. They're handled internally in the—it happens
 8 every day.

9 **221. REP. DONALDS:** Who was notified, Governor Walz?

10 **222. GOV. WALZ:** The agencies do their work, the commissioners, and then if someone
 11 in my office was notified, they let me know. As governor, I make 50 decisions a day.

12 **223. REP. DONALDS:** Governor Walz, we have it under sworn testimony in the
 13 Oversight Committee that your former chief of staff was notified directly by these
 14 various commissioners about the fraud in Minnesota.

15 **224. GOV. WALZ:** That could be correct.

16 **225. REP. DONALDS:** So are you saying that your chief of staff didn't notify you?

17 **226. GOV. WALZ:** I'm saying I don't recall whether he did at that time or not, but we
 18 took action.

19
 20 **B. Budget Increases Awareness**

21 **227. REP. DONALDS:** Let's talk about budgets. Governor Walz, **Feeding Our Future**
 22 went from \$307,000 in 2018 to \$199 million in 2021. Are you aware of this increase in
 23 budgetary costs from **Feeding Our Future**?

24 **228. GOV. WALZ:** Not specifically, but I know it increased during the pandemic.

25 **229. REP. DONALDS:** Housing stabilization services went from \$27 million in 2021 to
 26 \$105 million in 2024. Are you aware of this increase?

27 **230. GOV. WALZ:** Not specifically, but I know it increased.

28 **231. REP. DONALDS:** Autism centers went from \$24 million in 2019 to \$342 million in
 29 2024. Are you aware of that?

30 **232. GOV. WALZ:** Not specifically again, but yes, we know the budgets increased.

1 **233. REP. DONALDS:** Integrated community supports went from \$4.6 million in 2021
2 to \$170 million in 2024. Are you aware of that?

3 **234. GOV. WALZ:** Again, not specifically on the numbers, but it's the budget.

4 **235. REP. DONALDS:** Governor Walz, you have to submit a budget to your legislature
5 every single year, like every governor has to do. If you're not aware of these increases,
6 what was your office doing?

7 **236. GOV. WALZ:** Everyone is balanced. My budget is about \$72 billion. It involves 23
8 agencies.

10 **PART V: WHISTLEBLOWER RETALIATION TESTIMONY**

11

12 **A. Rep. Timmons (R-SC) Questioning**

13 **237. REP. TIMMONS:** Governor Walz, under your leadership, Minnesota has become
14 the poster boy of fraud in America. Between the Feeding Our Future Scheme and
15 massive widespread fraud in autism and childcare programs, your tenure will be defined
16 by immense negligence costing taxpayers at least hundreds of millions, if not billions of
17 dollars.

18 **238. REP. TIMMONS:** In 2019, in the first months of your administration, your
19 legislative auditor found serious weaknesses in the childcare assistance program,
20 including inadequate attendance verification, repeat bad actors cycling through the
21 system, weak enforcement, and **employees who feared retaliation for raising concerns**.
22 Those warnings were specific, they were actionable, and they were documented, and you
23 were already in office at this time.

24 **239. REP. TIMMONS:** If, as you say, the buck stops with you, Governor, it's unclear
25 when the buck actually stopped. In your written testimony, you listed multiple actions
26 you have taken to curb fraud, yet clearly they were insufficient as Minnesota ended up
27 with 14 Medicaid programs deemed high risk, representing over \$18 billion in spending.

28 **240. REP. TIMMONS:** The buck didn't stop when whistleblowers were silenced
29 years ago—it only stopped when you realized the fraudsters were drawing attention
30 from people that you couldn't intimidate into silence. Fraud of this magnitude does not
31 happen overnight. It builds slowly, and it's the result of institutional failures and poor
32 leadership.

33 **241. REP. TIMMONS:** So, Governor, my question is simple. If the buck stopped with
34 you, as you said, who failed between 2019 and 2022, and why were they not held
35 accountable?

1 **242. GOV. WALZ:** Who failed in what, Congressman?

2 **243. REP. TIMMONS:** This fraud has been growing until recently and you have been
3 governor for many years—

4 **244. GOV. WALZ:** Well, thank you for the question, Congressman. And I would
5 disagree with your characterization, obviously. And the legislative auditor—I don't know
6 what the time period they investigated, those usually come months after they did it. We
7 took office in January of 2019 and immediately started acting on what those OLA—the
8 Office of Legislative Auditor, independent branch—started asking us to do, where we
9 started changing the programs.

10 **245. REP. TIMMONS:** That's not what the record reflects. The record reflects that there
11 were all of these whistleblowers and **they were being intimidated because alleged**
12 **racism was the motivation behind the degree of enforcement.**

13 **246. GOV. WALZ:** So, Congressman, I've never got a chance to speak to these folks.
14 What I'll say is that in my time in Congress—proof that I—I support the strongest
15 whistleblower protections we can possibly have.

16 **247. REP. TIMMONS:** We have plenty of opportunities. We're not talking to every
17 other state. We're talking to Minnesota because of the rampant fraud.

18 **248. GOV. WALZ:** Is there no fraud in any other states?

19 **249. REP. TIMMONS:** So look, three members of the Minnesota State House of
20 Representatives who all served on the Fraud Prevention and State Oversight Policy
21 Committee gave transcribed interviews that confirmed that **your administration was**
22 **aware of the fraud happening in the state, yet chose not to act due to fear of political**
23 **repercussions and intentionally silenced whistleblowers who tried to come forward.**

24 **250. GOV. WALZ:** Well, that's incorrect.

25 **251. REP. TIMMONS:** Mr. Chairman, I'm gonna insert this in the record—"Roadmap to
26 Program Integrity and Fraud Prevention" is the report.

28 **B. "Compassion Over Compliance" Policy**

29 **252. REP. TIMMONS:** This report relays that several current and former Department of
30 Human Services employees have described messaging from DHS leadership that
31 **emphasized compassion over compliance.** So the former leaders have said that DHS
32 should be guided by **70% compassion and 30% compliance.**

33 **253. REP. TIMMONS:** And then in 2023, DHS public presentation leadership
34 encouraged employees to embrace a **60-40 mindset.** Again, that 60% compassion and
35 40% compliance.

1 **254. GOV. WALZ:** I want to have as much compassion for people that need social
2 safety nets. Like, I wanna have a hundred percent compassion.

3 **255. REP. TIMMONS:** Mm-hmm.

4 **256. GOV. WALZ:** But we also have to have a hundred percent compliance.

5 **257. REP. TIMMONS:** Agreed. Or work as hard as we can to get there. And as you see
6 it here today, and after acknowledging how widespread and pervasive fraud is in
7 Minnesota, how should your state employees prioritize program compliance? What is
8 your message to people now, relative to this compassion-compliance ratio?

9 **258. GOV. WALZ:** Well, I think I agree with you on this, Congressman. I don't think it's
10 an either-or choice. We need to make sure—we're not gonna stop these programs. We're
11 not gonna stop being the top state for children in the country, but we need to make sure if
12 we're gonna continue those programs, that we need to have fraud prevention and program
13 integrity in.

14 **259. GOV. WALZ:** So I agree with you. It's not an either-or, it's not a percentage. In
15 order to give the benefits to the people that need the most, we have to be good stewards
16 of tax dollars.

17 **260. REP. TIMMONS:** That's right. And for every dollar that is stolen through waste,
18 fraud, and abuse, that is a dollar that cannot—

19 **261. GOV. WALZ:** I agree.

20 **262. REP. TIMMONS:** —go to people that need it most.

21 **263. GOV. WALZ:** I agree with you. So we need to prioritize compliance, make sure
22 that we have the least amount of fraud possible.

23 **264. REP. TIMMONS:** And, with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.
24

25 **PART VI: FRAUD RECOVERY TESTIMONY**

26 **Rep. Burlison (R-MO) Questioning**

27
28 **265. REP. BURLISON:** We know that \$250 million was stolen for the Feeding Our
29 Futures program. Are you familiar with the fact that those working for the program and
30 individuals later convicted of fraudulent crimes met with Mr. Ellison in the recorded
31 conversation?

1 **266. GOV. WALZ:** I believe the Attorney General just testified to that. Yes.

2 **267. REP. BURLISON:** It was a 54-minute conversation and in that the conversation
3 was recorded and as an audio file secured by—it, there was a FOIA request to get that
4 information. He can clearly be heard pledging his support to individuals who would soon
5 become his family's campaign donors, and later Feeding Our Future criminal defendants.

6 **268. REP. BURLISON:** The ask occurs around minute 43:30. Specifically the request
7 for him is in the AG statutory role as the attorney for state agencies to intervene on behalf
8 of these fraudsters. And at 44:26, Mr. Ellison assures the fraudsters, quote unquote, "**Of**
9 **course I'm here to help.**" And at the 45 minute mark, he says, quote unquote, "**Let's go**
10 **fight these people.**"

11 **269. REP. BURLISON:** These people, meaning the agencies that were looking into the
12 fraud. Have you listened to this audio?

13 **270. GOV. WALZ:** Today was the first time I've heard it. I'm familiar with it and I don't
14 know if I can validate that characterization.

15 **271. REP. BURLISON:** If this is true, do you have concerns?

16 **272. GOV. WALZ:** I'm not gonna speculate on a—like I said, I cannot characterize what
17 it was.

18 **273. REP. BURLISON:** Certainly you've heard the allegations that Mr. Ellison was
19 working with individuals—like to try to, that people were trying to reach out to him to try
20 to avoid any kind of prosecution.

21 **274. GOV. WALZ:** I don't know if I would characterize it like that. I don't—I couldn't
22 do that.

23 **275. REP. BURLISON:** How would you characterize it?

24 **276. GOV. WALZ:** I don't know. I wasn't there. I just heard the clip you had.

25 **277. REP. BURLISON:** How much fraudulent money has been recovered?

26 **278. GOV. WALZ:** Oh, I don't have the number in front of me, but I've heard the highest
27 number is \$80 million. I mean, that could be—I can't verify that.

28 **279. REP. BURLISON:** So it's reported that it's at most \$80 million. And as we know,
29 the amount that has been attributed to fraud in Minnesota alone is estimated—I think on
30 the low end, the conservative side is \$9 billion. I think the Trump administration says \$19
31 billion.

32 **280. GOV. WALZ:** Congressman, I don't see anything to show that, but what I've
33 acknowledged is \$1 is too much. I think the local people and the folks who are taking
34 account of this show it just at about \$271 million.

1 **281. REP. BURLISON:** Do you think the effort to return the money has been
2 successful?

3 **282. GOV. WALZ:** I can't speak to that. I don't have any part in that.

4 **283. REP. BURLISON:** I think that returning \$80 million out of a—let's say assume just
5 \$9 billion—which would be zero or 0.08%. **Less than 1% of the money has been**
6 **recovered.**

7 **284. GOV. WALZ:** Congressman, no one's saying the \$9 billion, other than a potential
8 for that. And that didn't mean every dollar that's out there. And I think that was
9 characterized last week by the US Attorney's office as saying that that caused problems
10 because there's no evidence to back that up.

11 **285. REP. BURLISON:** But I wanna be clear, that doesn't make it any better.

12 **286. GOV. WALZ:** I just wanna be clear, I hear you right on the \$300 million—there's
13 more work.

14 **287. REP. BURLISON:** Would you agree there's more work to do? If you're at 1% or
15 less than 1%, there's more work to do.

16 **288. GOV. WALZ:** I think if it's 99%, there's more work to do.
17

18 **PART VII: ACCOUNTABILITY FOR STATE EMPLOYEES**

19
20 **289. REP. BURLISON:** Last week you stated to the press that you have fired people
21 who weren't doing their jobs. Is that correct?

22 **290. GOV. WALZ:** What I stated was that people have been put into new positions,
23 okay? That we removed people from positions.

24 **291. REP. BURLISON:** So you did not fire anyone? So they—people stepped away.
25 You just shuffled—shuffled the decks on the Titanic.

26 **292. GOV. WALZ:** I think they left. They left the org. They left state government.

27 **293. REP. BURLISON:** Okay. All right. Thank you Mr. Chairman. I yield back.
28

KEY FINDINGS DOCUMENTED IN THIS TESTIMONY

1. AG Ellison's Contradictory Statements on Prosecution Authority

Statement in February 26, 2026 Letter to Plaintiff (per case record):

"The Minnesota Legislature... did not delegate any such authority to this Office, nor did it delegate the authority to investigate criminal matters to this Office."

Statements in Congressional Testimony (March 4, 2026):

- "Prosecuting Medicaid fraud is very important work that we do. We do it every single day." (§200)

- "In Minnesota we have 87 county attorneys. The AG does Medicaid fraud." (§194)

- "We're doing the ones we supposed to do." (§195)

- "We need to pass stronger legislation in Minnesota to help my office prosecute Medicaid fraud." (§197)

- "We've won 300 Medicaid fraud convictions—more than any other state of similar size." (§50)

2. AG Ellison's 2021 Meeting with Fraudsters

- 54-minute recorded meeting with individuals who became Feeding Our Future defendants
- At **43:30** of the meeting recording: Request for Ellison to intervene on behalf of fraudsters
- At **44:26** of the meeting recording: Ellison says "**Of course I'm here to help**"
- At **45:00** of the meeting recording: Ellison says "**Let's go fight these people**" (referring to agencies investigating fraud)
- Meeting attendees became campaign donors to Ellison's family, then criminal defendants
- *Note: These timestamps refer to the 54-minute Ellison meeting recording; for YouTube hearing timestamps see KEY TIMESTAMPS section above*

3. Whistleblower Retaliation

- Legislative auditor found "employees who feared retaliation for raising concerns" (§238)

- Three Minnesota State Representatives confirmed administration "intentionally silenced whistleblowers" (§249)
- Whistleblowers "were being intimidated because alleged racism was the motivation behind the degree of enforcement" (§245)

4. "Compassion Over Compliance" Policy

- DHS leadership emphasized 70/30 or 60/40 compassion-to-compliance ratio (§252-253)

5. Minimal Recovery of Fraudulent Funds

- Less than 1% of fraudulent funds recovered (\$80M of \$9B+) (§283)

6. Administration Awareness Timeline

- Governor Walz confirmed administration was aware of Feeding Our Future fraud "as early as May of 2020" (§217-218)
- Chief of staff was notified directly by commissioners about fraud (§223-224)

RELEVANCE TO KIRCHNER V. ELLISON (Case No. 26-CV-726)

This testimony directly contradicts the February 26, 2026 denial letter from Defendant's office, which claimed:

"The Minnesota Legislature... did not delegate any such authority to this Office, nor did it delegate the authority to investigate criminal matters to this Office."

AG Ellison's sworn congressional testimony establishes:

1. **He actively prosecutes Medicaid fraud** ("every single day")
2. **His office has jurisdiction over criminal Medicaid fraud cases** ("The AG does Medicaid fraud")
3. **He operates within a "web" of prosecution authority** with county attorneys and federal prosecutors
4. **He seeks expanded authority** to prosecute more fraud cases

The differential treatment between Plaintiff's criminal referral (denied with false statement of law) and the 2021 Feeding Our Future meeting (promised assistance: "Of course I'm here to help") establishes a factual foundation for the Equal Protection claim.

END OF TRANSCRIPT

Transcription Notes:

- Transcript prepared from video source for use as court exhibit
- Speaker identifications based on context and committee proceedings
- [VIDEO] notations indicate playback of pre-recorded material
- Minor verbal fillers (uh, um) retained for accuracy
- Bold text indicates key quoted statements relevant to the case
- Paragraph numbers assigned for citation purposes

Certification: This transcript represents a good-faith effort to accurately capture the statements made during the referenced congressional hearing. Original video source should be consulted for verification.