

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 29, 2024

Honorable Kristen Clarke  
Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Justice  
Civil Rights Division  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Assistant Attorney General Clarke:

We write to urge the Civil Rights Division to investigate possible violations of constitutional civil rights protections and federal law by the Texas Attorney General’s Office with regard to recent targeted raids against a number of Latino voting rights organizers, candidates for office, and volunteers.<sup>1</sup>

As United States Senators, no one understands better than we do the importance of election integrity and ensuring a safe and fair election this coming November. But decades of research and investigations have made clear that voter fraud is exceedingly rare and that the vast majority of allegations of fraud turn out to be entirely baseless.<sup>2</sup>

It is equally clear that these nebulous allegations of voter fraud being pursued by the Texas Attorney General’s Office fit into a long history of weaponizing the government to suppress the vote and intimidate voters of color in our country.<sup>3</sup> The decision to target *only* Latino candidates and voting rights organizers, including elderly volunteers dedicated to helping their community exercise their rights,<sup>4</sup> demonstrates that this is just the latest attempt to scare minority communities out of using their political voice.

What is particularly alarming is the timing of these raids in Texas. In a matter of months, American voters will participate in a federal election to decide their president, Senators, and members of Congress. Early voting in some states begins as soon as next month. Choosing to not only conduct these targeted raids but to heavily publicize them by citing—with no evidence—“allegations of election fraud and vote harvesting” so close to a general election already mired in partisan fighting and fear of violence against voters and election workers is greatly concerning.

The U.S. Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division is tasked with upholding the civil and constitutional rights of all persons in the United States. That task is rarely more important than

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<sup>1</sup> Kayla Guo, *LULAC Condemns Paxton’s election fraud raids as “intimidation,”* TEXAS TRIBUNE, August 23, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Owen Averill et al., *Widespread election fraud claims by republicans don’t match the evidence*, BROOKINGS, November 22, 2023; JUSTIN LEVITT, *THE TRUTH ABOUT VOTER FRAUD 7-11* (November 9, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., *150 Years and Counting*, National Museum of African American History & Culture, <https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/reconstruction/voting-rights> (last visited August 27, 2024).

<sup>4</sup> Ashley Killough & Ed Lavandra, *Latino advocacy group wants federal investigation of Texas AG over home searches tied to voter fraud probe*, CNN, August 27, 2024.

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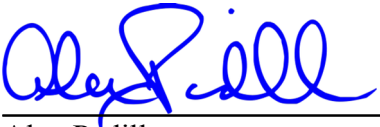
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during an election year when the right to vote must be fiercely guarded, particularly for our vulnerable voting communities.

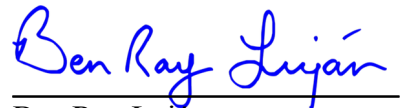
Therefore, we urge the Department to investigate the Texas Attorney General's troubling raids against Latino individuals in Texas and to work diligently this election cycle to prevent the unlawful suppression of the vote and intimidation of voters.

We respectfully request your response by September 12, 2024.

Sincerely,



Alex Padilla  
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan  
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator