

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 15, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

Ms. Fani T. Willis
District Attorney
Fulton County District Attorney's Office
136 Pryor Street SW
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Ms. Willis:

The Justice Department Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), within the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), awards federal grants to state and local communities to “administer a variety of juvenile justice and child protection programs.”¹ The Fulton County District Attorney's Office (DA) has received millions of dollars for law enforcement related programs through OJP.² According to recent reports, the Fulton County DA may have misused funds from these grants to fund unrelated travel or the purchase of computers and “swag.”³ We write today to request information connected to an OJJDP grant and other federal grants to Fulton County.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, OJJDP awarded Fulton County nearly \$500,000 to establish the Fulton County Center of Youth Empowerment and Gang Prevention (Center).⁴ The stated purpose of the Center was to provide professional development, academic mentorship, and a community network for youth at risk of becoming involved or continuing in gang activity.⁵ According to reports, the Center has yet to open and the “building meant to house it is closed to the public, its gates padlocked.”⁶

Reports have raised allegations that portions of this and other federal grants funded by taxpayer dollars provided to the Fulton County DA's Office were subject to misuse.⁷ Most recently, the Justice Department reportedly stated that it found “inconsistencies in what Fulton County has reported to [the Federal Subaward Reporting System] and we are working with them to update their reporting accordingly.”⁸ Specifically, the inconsistencies relate to \$88,900 from

¹ *Funding*, U.S. DEP'T OF JUST. OFF. OF JUVENILE JUST. AND DELINQ. PREVENTION, <https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/funding> (last visited May 15, 2024).

² *See e.g.* Sexual Assault Kit Initiative, *SAKI Grantee: Fulton County (Georgia)*, (last visited May 15, 2024) <https://www.sakitta.org/fultoncounty/>; Adam Murphy, *Millions in funding given to help Fulton County address backlog of rape kits*, ATLANTA NEWS FIRST (Sep. 14, 2023) <https://www.atlantaneewsfirst.com/2023/09/14/millions-funding-given-help-fulton-county-address-backlog-rape-kits/>.

³ Andrew Kerr, *Fani Willis Axed Employee Who Blew Whistle on Misuse of Federal Funds*, THE WASHINGTON FREE BEACON (Jan. 31, 2024), <https://freebeacon.com/democrats/fani-willis-axed-employee-who-blew-whistle-on-misuse-of-federal-funds/>.

⁴ *Gang Prevention in Fulton County*, U.S. DEP'T OF JUST. OFF. OF JUVENILE JUST. AND DELINQ. PREVENTION, <https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/funding/awards/2020-mu-mu-0022> (last visited May 15, 2024).

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Andrew Kerr, *Fani Willis Axed Employee Who Blew Whistle on Misuse of Federal Funds*, THE WASHINGTON FREE BEACON (Jan. 31, 2024), <https://freebeacon.com/democrats/fani-willis-axed-employee-who-blew-whistle-on-misuse-of-federal-funds/>.

⁷ Andrew Kerr, *Justice Department Uncovers 'Inconsistencies' in Fani Willis's Use of Federal Grant Funds*, THE WASHINGTON FREE BEACON (Apr. 10, 2024) <https://freebeacon.com/biden-administration/justice-department-uncovers-inconsistencies-in-fani-williss-use-of-federal-grant-funds/>.

⁸ *Id.*

your office to the Offender Alumni Association.⁹ Fulton County records show that money was transferred, but Justice Department records reportedly do not, and the reported administrative director of the Offender Alumni Association said to the press, “I have no idea where that information is coming from,” referring to the records of payment to the Association.¹⁰

Amanda Timpson, the former Director of Gang Prevention and Intervention for the Fulton County DA Office, reportedly notified you that an official in your office planned to use the OJJDP gang prevention funding “on computers and other ineligible expenses” such as MacBooks, “swag,” and travel instead of helping at risk youth in the community.¹¹ Ms. Timpson brought these concerns to your attention on November 19, 2021. Two months later you terminated her employment.¹²

In FY2020, the Fulton County DA’s office received \$2 million in federal funding through OJP’s Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI).¹³ According to OJP’s Bureau of Justice Assistance, the office that administers SAKI, these funds were authorized to “address the issues that underline the problem of unsubmitted [sexual assault kits]” and help law enforcement and prosecutors solve more of these heinous crimes.¹⁴ However, data published by Fulton County, from 2020 to 2023 show the Fulton County DA’s office spent approximately 49% of its SAKI funding expenditures on travel and conference expenses, such as hotel, airfare, and rental cars, and approximately 28% was actually spent on professional services, such as forensic and DNA testing.¹⁵ Moreover, in 2023 the Fulton County DA’s office spent approximately 98% of its SAKI funding on travel and conference expenditures.¹⁶ The apparent and significant discrepancy between the purpose of the federal award of taxpayer money and the actual use of that money raises alarms that it hasn’t been used as Congress intended.

The waste or misuse of taxpayer funds is unacceptable. Therefore, given these recent reports, we request the following:

1. A list of all federal grants received by the Fulton County DA since FY2019.
2. A complete accounting of all expenditures for each federal grant.
 - a. The request includes, but is not limited to, individualized receipts and invoices for expenditures, summaries of conference and travel expenses,

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ Andrew Kerr, *Fani Willis Axed Employee Who Blew Whistle on Misuse of Federal Funds*, THE WASHINGTON FREE BEACON (Jan. 31, 2024), <https://freebeacon.com/democrats/fani-willis-axed-employee-who-blew-whistle-on-misuse-of-federal-funds/>.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ Sexual Assault Kit Initiative, *SAKI Grantee: Fulton County (Georgia)*, (last visited May 15, 2024) <https://www.sakitta.org/fultoncounty/>; Adam Murphy, *Millions in funding given to help Fulton County address backlog of rape kits*, ATLANTA NEWS FIRST (Sep. 14, 2023) <https://www.atlantanewsfirst.com/2023/09/14/millions-funding-given-help-fulton-county-address-backlog-rape-kits/>.

¹⁴ Bureau of Justice Assistance, *Comprehensive Approach to Unsubmitted Sexual Assault Cases in Fulton County*, (last visited May 15, 2024) <https://bj.a.ojp.gov/funding/awards/2020-ak-bx-0005-0>.

¹⁵ Fulton County, *Open Checkbook: Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI)-District Attorney*, (last visited May 15, 2024) [https://opencheckbook.fultoncountyga.gov/#!/year/All%20Years/explore/0-/unit_name/Sexual+Assault+Kit+Initiative+\(SAKI\)/0-/department_name/District+Attorney/0-barChart/object_name](https://opencheckbook.fultoncountyga.gov/#!/year/All%20Years/explore/0-/unit_name/Sexual+Assault+Kit+Initiative+(SAKI)/0-/department_name/District+Attorney/0-barChart/object_name); Fulton County, *Open Checkbook: Sexual Assault Kit Initiative SAKI2-District Attorney*, (last visited May 15, 2024) https://opencheckbook.fultoncountyga.gov/#!/year/All%20Years/explore/0-/unit_name/Sexual+Assault+Kit+Initiative+SAKI2/0-/department_name/District+Attorney/0/object_name.

¹⁶ *Id.*

conflicts of interest screenings, performance measures and outcomes, and all records¹⁷ related to the expenditure of these taxpayer funds and compliance with all applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.

3. All records referring or relating to the Fulton County DA's planned expenditures for each federal grant it received, including but not limited to, any complaints or communications referring or relating to concerns that an expenditure may not be permitted or was inconsistent with the purpose of the federal grant associated with those funds.

Please respond to this letter no later than May 29, 2024. Thank you for your cooperation and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget



Ron Johnson
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee
on Investigations

cc: The Honorable Michael Horowitz
Inspector General
U.S. Department of Justice

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
Chairman
Committee on the Budget

¹⁷ "Records" include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (e-mails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).