

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on the Judiciary
Washington, DC 20515-6216
One Hundred Fourteenth Congress

September 13, 2016

The Honorable Loretta Lynch
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Lynch:

As members of the House Committee on the Judiciary, we write to ask that you investigate allegations of criminal misconduct surrounding the \$25,000 donation from the Donald J. Trump Foundation to Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi.

We understand the operative facts to include the following: It has been reported that Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi personally solicited a political contribution from Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump while her office deliberated joining an investigation of fraud at Trump University.¹ A political organization backing Mrs. Bondi's reelection reported receiving a \$25,000 donation from the Donald J. Trump Foundation on September 17, 2013—just four days after her office announced it might join a New York state probe of Trump University and its affiliates.² At least one of Mr. Trump's family members also donated to her campaign.³ After receiving these funds, Mrs. Bondi declined to further investigate Mr. Trump's business interests.⁴

This fact pattern indicates that these payments may have influenced Mrs. Bondi's official decision not to participate in litigation against Mr. Trump. A number of criminal statutes would appear to be implicated by this course of conduct, including the following:

¹ See, e.g., Jeff Horowitz et al., *Florida AG asked Trump for donation before nixing fraud case*, ASSOCIATED PRESS, June 6, 2016.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ Michael Van Sickler, *Trump Contribution to Bondi re-election draws more scrutiny to her fundraising*, TAMPA BAY TIMES, Oct. 17, 2013.

- 18 U.S.C. § 201(b) – pertaining to unlawful bribery schemes.
- 18 U.S.C. §§ 1341, 1343, and 1346 – pertaining to bribery schemes that deprive constituents of the honest services of public officials.
- 26 U.S.C. § 7206 and 18 U.S.C. § 1001 – concerning a deliberate failure to disclose the transfer of funds by a non-profit foundation to the Internal Revenue Service, under penalty of perjury.

Therefore, our concerns extend beyond Mr. Trump’s violation of tax laws. We note that he has already paid a \$2,500 penalty to the Internal Revenue Service and refunded his foundation \$25,000.⁵

We also note that this allegation—that Mr. Trump bribed a Florida state official to protect his business interests—is consistent with Mr. Trump’s own statements about using money to influence politics. In a 2015 interview with the *Wall Street Journal*, he justified his actions this way: “As a businessman and a very substantial donor to very important people, when you give, they do whatever the hell you want them to do.”⁶ He was even more direct at campaign stop earlier this year: “I’ve given to everybody. Because that was my job. I gotta give to them Because when I want something, I get it. When I call, they kiss my ass.”⁷

In recent days, there has been an increasingly urgent call for the Department of Justice to examine these alleged crimes by a number of editorial boards, including the *Tampa Bay Times*, the *Sun Sentinel*, and the *Washington Post*. (“Feds should investigate Bondi-Trump connection;”⁸ “Public deserves facts in Bondi-Trump controversy;”⁹ “The Pam Bondi case shows Trump is more hustler than businessman.”¹⁰)

For all the foregoing reasons, we respectfully ask that you examine these allegations.

Thank you for your prompt consideration of this matter.

⁵ Michael Auslen, *Tracing the controversy of Trump’s \$25,000 donation to Pam Bondi*, TAMPA BAY TIMES, Sept. 7, 2016.

⁶ Peter Nicholas, *Donald Trump Walks Back His Past Praise of Hillary Clinton*, WALL ST. JOURNAL, July 29, 2015.

⁷ David A. Fahrenthold and Rosalind S. Helderman, *Trump bragged that his money bought off politicians. Just not this time.*, WASH. POST, Sept. 7, 2016.

⁸ TAMPA BAY TIMES, Sept. 8, 2016.

⁹ FLORIDA SUN SENTINEL, Sept. 8, 2016.

¹⁰ WASH. POST, Sept. 8, 2016.

Sincerely,

John Conyers, Jr.

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Ranking Member
House Committee on the Judiciary

David N. Ciddione

Alexander E. Deutch

Jerrold Nadler

Sheila Jackson Lee

Jim Oberweiser

Steve Cohen

Jim Gensler

Frank Rosten

Mark Felt

D. I. Co

Karen Bass

Judy Chu

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Perkins

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cc: Robert Goodlatte, Chairman, House Committee on the Judiciary