

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2509

January 1, 2025

Dr. Rand Paul
Chair-elect
Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman-elect Paul:

Early this morning, a crazed terrorist in New Orleans killed at least 10 individuals, and injured dozens more, after driving a truck into a crowd of celebrators on Bourbon Street. This was not an accident: in the words of local law enforcement, it was “very intentional behavior”¹ and New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell described it as a “terrorist attack.”² The FBI is investigating this attack as an act of terrorism.³ Possible improvised explosives have been found at the scene.⁴ We continue to learn concerning details through the news media.

This apparent terrorist attack is horrific. Americans deserve to celebrate in their cities without fear. But for the last four years, the Biden Administration has made them less safe. Public accountability must begin with Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas and FBI Director Christopher Wray. **When the 119th Congress convenes next week, and you assume leadership of the Senate Homeland Security Committee, I urge you to immediately call Mayorkas and Wray to publicly testify prior to their departure from office.** They must give a full account of this attack and any departmental failures related to the incident. For instance, news reports indicate that the truck involved in the attack may have recently crossed into the U.S. from Mexico.⁵

Until January 20, the American people remain at risk unless the outgoing administration is held to account for policy changes that have made this country less safe. Witness, for instance, President Biden’s disgraceful pardons of murderers and corrupt officials.⁶ Making matters worse, Secretary Mayorkas and Director Wray shamefully skipped a major oversight hearing late last year, where the Committee was set to conduct oversight over the department’s assessments of “threats to the homeland.”⁷

I urge you to make clear that on their way out the door, Secretary Mayorkas, Director Wray, and other Administration officials cannot shirk public accountability. The American people deserve the truth. As we continue to learn more about the incident, DHS and the FBI must provide timely answers to the following questions:

1. Was the perpetrator of this apparent terrorist attack a foreign national?

¹ <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/new-orleans-vehicle-crash-bourbon-street-crowd-casualties-shooting/>

² <https://www.cnn.com/us/live-news/new-orleans-mass-casualty-bourbon-street-01-01-24-hnk#cm5dv1m8v0000356mfbcsmo4>

³ <https://x.com/FBI/status/1874466901109121382>

⁴ <https://www.cnn.com/us/live-news/new-orleans-mass-casualty-bourbon-street-01-01-24-hnk#cm5dvxpo0005356mdgwc1qq6>

⁵ <https://x.com/aishahasnie/status/1874499691855118377?s=46>

⁶ <https://www.city-journal.org/article/biden-commutes-prison-death-sentences-garland>

⁷ <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/hawley-says-mayorkas-wray-absolutely-skipped-senate-hearing-due-laken-riley-verdict-calls-subpoenas>

2. Was the perpetrator of this attack previously known to DHS or the FBI?
3. Was the perpetrator of this attack unlawfully present in the United States?
4. Did the perpetrator of this attack act alone or in conjunction with others?
5. What was the motive for this attack?

Thank you for your attention to this matter. And I look forward to working with you on the Committee in the 119th Congress to restore the public trust.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Hawley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J".

Josh Hawley
United States Senator