

# United States Senate

August 8, 2019

The Honorable William P. Barr  
Attorney General of the United States  
United States Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest  
Washington, D.C. 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Barr:

In the days following the senseless attack at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland Florida, last year, I learned of repeated failures by the Federal Bureau of Investigations to properly investigate and act on specific tips received about the shooter weeks earlier. Since that time, I have repeatedly sought information from Director Christopher Wray regarding the steps he has taken to identify and hold accountable those within his agency responsible for those failures.

My requests were met with months of silence from the FBI until just last week. However, the response I was finally provided refused to address the most important question of accountability for the failures that preceded the attack in Parkland. Instead, the FBI demurred, saying “due to significant privacy implications” it would not discuss “information pertaining to employees who may have received or handled tips to the FBI.” What the FBI characterizes as mere “personnel matters” is, in reality, a potentially life-saving act of accountability for the agency’s documented failures. I urge you to seek answers from Director Wray that have been denied to the victims’ families and make sure these documented failures by his agency will never happen again. While I have the utmost respect for the men and women of the FBI, the agency’s response to my request is very disappointing.

Unfortunately, the FBI’s failures to properly identify and investigate threats, and intervene before tragedy strikes, have been apparent in several acts of mass violence in Florida. In the case of the attack at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, specific tips about the shooter – including a detailed warning received by the FBI’s national call center just weeks before the attack – were never even forwarded to the South Florida field office for an investigation. In fact, it appears the FBI did nothing with this detailed information of an imminent threat. Similar instances of pre-attack notifications received by the FBI regarding other high-profile perpetrators of heinous acts of violence in Florida – including the attacks at the Fort Lauderdale Airport, the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, and the Tallahassee yoga studio – paint a very concerning picture of an investigative agency that is repeatedly failing to identify and investigate threats.

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I am sure you agree that these failures are inexcusable, and there must be accountability within the agency to make sure such grave lapses in the FBI's core investigative function are corrected. Several family members of the Parkland victims recently appeared before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. I continue to be awestruck by their remarkable strength and resolve in the aftermath of this unthinkable tragedy, and remain committed to pursuing accountability for the failures that led to the deaths of their sons, daughters, and spouses.

I have attached to this letter the FBI's response to my repeated inquiries that I finally received last week. I ask that you seek the answers from Director Wray that I have sought without avail over the past year, and request that you keep me apprised of any responses you receive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial "R" and a cursive "Scott".

Rick Scott  
Senator