

## United States Senate

June 21, 2023

The Honorable Merrick Garland  
Attorney General  
United States Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Attorney General Garland:

Earlier this month, the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia announced federal charges against the mother of a child in Newport News, Virginia, who shot his teacher at school using the mother's handgun in January 2023. The mother, Deja Taylor, was charged with two federal crimes for being an unlawful user of controlled substances while in possession of a firearm and making a false statement related to her unlawful use of controlled substances on ATF Form 4473 to purchase the firearm in July 2022. Ms. Taylor pleaded guilty to those federal charges on Monday, June 12, 2023, and faces a prison sentence of between 18 months and 24 months for her crimes.

I reference this case because it has remarkable similarities to another investigation conducted by the Department of Justice (DOJ): Hunter Biden. He has undoubtedly enjoyed far more favorable treatment than Ms. Taylor, remaining "under investigation" for those criminal firearm violations and federal tax crimes for the better part of five years.

Under your leadership, the DOJ appears to engage in disparate treatment toward political and personal allies of President Biden accused of criminal wrongdoing, compared with those perceived as his opponents. The reported plea agreement extended to President Biden's son is a farcical example of precisely that two-tiered approach to criminal justice by the DOJ under your leadership. What is the American public to take away from the outcome of this five-year investigation and leniency shown to Hunter Biden on both the federal tax violations and firearms offenses he committed?

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The Biden administration would have us believe the IRS should be weaponized to pursue the corrupt “tax cheats” that avoid paying their “fair share” of taxes... except when it’s the president’s son, who willfully failed to pay federal tax on foreign-derived sources of income paid to gain access to “the big guy.” There are numerous examples of people who have been handed much harsher penalties for nearly identical tax crimes. Wesley Snipes is perhaps the most well-known case. Mr. Snipes received three one-year prison sentences, which he served back-to-back, for committing a very similar crime as Hunter Biden. I challenge you to explain the difference in those two cases to the American people.

The Biden administration has also turbocharged the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) to reinterpret federal law and make overnight felons of millions of law-abiding gun owners, but balks at the notion of accountability for the president’s crack-addicted son who unlawfully purchased and carelessly wielded a firearm despite his open acknowledgment of being under the influence of controlled substances.

Deja Taylor goes to prison, Hunter Biden avoids prosecution altogether. Wesley Snipes goes to prison, Hunter Biden receives minor probation. It is time for you to explain these decisions clearly to the American people. Under your leadership, the Department of Justice is facing a crisis of trustworthiness in the eyes of the American people. You alone can do the hard but necessary work to fix that problem and restore integrity to this department and the American justice system.

I expect a prompt response to the concerns I have outlined here, and look forward to seeing you clearly communicate your actions to the American people.

Choosing to ignore these concerns and keep Americans in the dark will only further confirm our gravest worries about your purposeful politicization of the Department and creates a dangerous two-tiered system of justice in America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Rick Scott  
United States Senator