

# FBI Targeted Parents Critical of School COVID Mandates as Potential ‘Threats’: Whistleblowers

Whistleblowers cite examples of the FBI investigating conservative parents, including a father for simply appearing ‘insurrectionist.’

By [Joseph Summers](#)

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*The Biden Administration used the Federal Bureau of Investigations’ (FBI) counterterrorism resources to [investigate](#) conservative parents and Republican politicians, according to whistleblowers cited in a congressional letter addressed to Attorney General Merrick Garland Wednesday.*

The letter, sent to Garland by Republican Reps. Jim Jordan and Mike Johnson, cites evidence provided to Congress by whistleblowers [showing](#) that the FBI launched dozens of investigations into parents for criticizing school COVID policies. The whistleblowers provided the evidence as part of an investigation into the application of Garland’s [October memo](#) to the FBI instructing them to treat conservative parents as “domestic terrorists.”

BREAKING: The Biden Administration has mobilized FBI counterterrorism resources to investigate parents, including at least one member of [@Moms4Liberty](#), for expressing protected political speech at local school board meetings.

This is a grave abuse of power. [pic.twitter.com/MdK0vm51VN](https://pic.twitter.com/MdK0vm51VN)

— Christopher F. Rufo ✕ (@realchrisrufo) [May 12, 2022](#)

Garland issued the memo following a letter from the National School Board Association (NSBA), which [asked](#) the Biden administration to target parents who attended school board meetings in opposition to curricula and school district COVID policies. Subsequently released emails [showed](#) that the administration worked in tandem with the NSBA to come up with the policy that would be found in Garland’s memo.

Whistleblowers: The FBI has labeled dozens of investigations into parents with a threat tag created by the FBI's Counterterrorism Division [pic.twitter.com/STILdrfbMz](https://pic.twitter.com/STILdrfbMz)

— Rep. Jim Jordan (@Jim\_Jordan) [May 11, 2022](#)

An email obtained by the House Judiciary Committee in November from the Counterterrorism and Criminal Division of the FBI [showed](#) that the bureau used the tag EDUOFFICIALS to monitor threats against education officials nationwide, a tag which whistleblowers [claim](#) was used to launch investigations into parents.

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
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May 11, 2022

The Honorable Merrick B. Garland  
Attorney General  
Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20535

Dear Attorney General Garland:

In sworn testimony before this Committee, you denied that the Department of Justice or its components were using counterterrorism statutes and resources to target parents at school board meetings.<sup>1</sup> We now have evidence that contrary to your testimony, the Federal Bureau of Investigation has labeled at least dozens of investigations into parents with a threat tag created by the FBI's Counterterrorism Division to assess and track investigations related to school boards. These cases include investigations into parents upset about mask mandates and state elected officials who publicly voiced opposition to vaccine mandates. These investigations into concerned parents are the direct result of, and would not have occurred but for, your directive to federal law enforcement to target these categories of people.

On October 4, 2021, in response to a request from the National School Boards Association that the federal government use counterterrorism tools, including the Patriot Act, to target parents at school board meetings, you issued a memorandum directing the FBI to address these threats.<sup>2</sup> The press release accompanying your memorandum highlighted the FBI's National Threat Operations Center to serve as a snitch-line for tips about parents at school board meetings.<sup>3</sup> By October 20, the FBI had operationalized your directive. In an FBI-wide email, the FBI's Counterterrorism Division and Criminal Division announced the creation of a new threat tag—EDUOFFICIALS—and directed all FBI personnel to apply it to school board-related threats.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Oversight of the United States Department of Justice: Hearing Before the H. comm. on the Judiciary*, 117th Cong. (2021) (testimony from Hon. Merrick Garland, Atty Gen., U.S. Dep't of Justice).

<sup>2</sup> Memorandum from Atty Gen. Merrick Garland, U.S. Dep't of Justice, Partnership Among Federal, State, Local, Tribal, And Territorial Law Enforcement to Address Threats Against School Administrators, Board Members, Teachers, and Staff (Oct. 4, 2021).

<sup>3</sup> Press Release, U.S. Dep't of Justice, Justice Department Addresses Violent Threats Against School Officials and Teachers (Oct. 4, 2021).

<sup>4</sup> Email from Carlton Peeples, Deputy Assistant Director, Criminal Investigative Div., Fed. Bureau of Investigation, to FBI\_SACS (Oct. 20, 2021).

We have learned from brave whistleblowers that the FBI has opened investigations with the EDUOFFICIALS threat tag in almost every region of the country and relating to all types of educational settings. The information we have received shows how, as a direct result of your directive, federal law enforcement is using counterterrorism resources to investigate protected First Amendment activity. For example:

- In one investigation begun following your directive, the FBI's ██████ Field Office interviewed a mom for allegedly telling a local school board "we are coming for you." The complaint, which came into the FBI through the National Threat Operations Center snitch-line, alleged that the mom was a threat because she belonged to a "right wing mom's group" known as "Moms for Liberty" and because she "is a gun owner." When an FBI agent interviewed the mom, she told the agent that she was upset about the school board's mask mandates and that her statement was a warning that her organization would seek to replace the school board with new members through the electoral process.
- The FBI's ██████ Field Office opened an investigation, subsequent to your directive, into a dad opposed to mask mandates. The complaint came in through the National Threat Operations Center snitch-line and alleged that the dad "fit the profile of an insurrectionist" because he "rails against the government," "believes all conspiracy theories," and "has a lot of guns and threatens to use them." When an FBI agent interviewed the complainant, the complainant admitted they had "no specific information or observations of . . . any crimes or threats," but they contacted the FBI after learning the Justice Department had a website "to submit tips to the FBI in regards to any concerning behavior directed toward school boards."
- In another case initiated after your directive, the FBI's ██████ Field Office opened an investigation into Republican state elected officials over allegations from a state Democratic party official that the Republicans "incited violence" by expressing public displeasure with school districts' vaccine mandates. This complaint also came into the FBI through the National Threat Operations Center snitch-line.

This whistleblower information is startling. You have subjected these moms and dads to the opening of an FBI investigation about them, the establishment of an FBI case file that includes their political views, and the application of a "threat tag" to their names as a direct result of their exercise of their fundamental constitutional right to speak and advocate for their children. This information is evidence of how the Biden Administration is using federal law enforcement, including counterterrorism resources, to investigate concerned parents for protected First Amendment activity. Although FBI agents ultimately—and rightly—determined that these cases did not implicate federal criminal statutes, the agents still exerted their limited time and resources investigating these complaints. This valuable law-enforcement time and resources could have been expended on real and pressing threats.

Source: @[realchrisrufo](#)/Twitter

According to the [letter](#), "These cases include investigations into parents upset about mask mandates and state elected officials who publicly voiced opposition to vaccine mandates. These investigations into concerned parents are the direct result of, and could not have occurred but for, [the] directive to federal law enforcement to target these categories of people."

Examples [mentioned](#) in the letter include a mother investigated for allegedly telling a school board member “we are coming for you.” The mother was reported for belonging to the conservative group “Moms for Liberty” and for owning a gun.

Another [example](#) cited shows that the FBI interviewed a father who opposed mask mandates because someone reported that he looked like an “insurrectionist” and “rails against the government.” It was also claimed that he owned “a lot of guns and threatens to use them.” The person that made the claim against the father later admitted that there was “no specific information or observations of ... any crimes or threats.”

A third example [shows](#) that a local Democratic Party official claimed that a Republican politician “incited violence” by opposing a school district’s jab policy.

“You have subjected these moms and dads to the opening of an FBI investigation about them, the establishment of an FBI case file that includes their political views, and the application of a ‘threat tag’ to their names as a direct result of their exercise of their fundamental constitutional right to speak and advocate for their children,” the letter [states](#).

“This whistleblower information raises serious concerns that your October 4 memorandum will chill protected First Amendment activity as parents will rightfully fear that their passionate advocacy for their children could result in a visit from federal law enforcement.”

Garland, testifying before Congress in October, [said](#) that the Department of Justice (DOJ) had not deployed antiterrorism tools against parents protesting COVID policy. “I can’t imagine any circumstance in which the Patriot Act would be used in the circumstances of parents complaining about their children,” Garland said, “nor can I imagine a circumstance where they would be labeled as domestic terrorism.”

The DOJ did not immediately respond to LifeSite’s request for comment.

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*Featured image: Garland is sworn in as Attorney General in March 2021. (Licensed under Public Domain)*

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