

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 1, 2017

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

Dear Attorney General Sessions:

I write to you today to ask that the recommendations of the Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety immediately be made public. The American people have a right to know the basis for enforcement policy changes made by the Department of Justice.

The President's Executive Order on a Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety, issued on February 9, 2017, instructed the Department of Justice (DOJ) to form a Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety (task force). In an April 5, 2017 memo, you stated that you established the task force on February 27, that the task force would be constituted by several subcommittees, and that the deadline for the task force to issue recommendations was July 27.

The deadline you set for the task force has now passed. In a July 26 statement, you said that you "have been acting on the Task Force's recommendations to set the policy of the Department" and you "will continue to review all of the task force's recommendations." From your own words, it is clear that the task force has provided you with policy recommendations. Moreover, you indicate that you have been changing DOJ policy on the basis of these recommendations.

These DOJ decisions could have dramatic and wide-ranging consequences for Americans' daily lives. According to your April memo, task force subcommittees were instructed to review and make recommendations to you regarding DOJ policies on marijuana, asset forfeiture, hate crimes, immigrant enforcement, and human trafficking. Already, DOJ has made sweeping changes in its treatment of civil asset forfeiture, sanctuary cities, and for-profit prisons.

Yet Americans remain in the dark about the content of the task force's recommendations, and which of your actions as Attorney General are being based on these recommendations. It is concerning to see this administration failing, once again, to be transparent and straightforward with the American people about the motivations behind its policy shifts.

I also am concerned about the secrecy shrouding the recommendations provided to you by the task force's marijuana subcommittee. Your April memo singles out marijuana policy and directs the task force to "ensure consistency with the Department's overall strategy on reducing violent crime." Especially given your past statements opposing state-legalized marijuana, the public deserves to know whether recommendations from the marijuana subcommittee are being used behind the scenes at DOJ to justify federal actions that undermine states' rights to set their own marijuana laws.

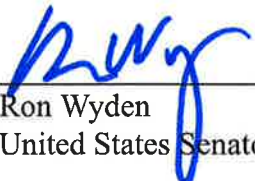
The citizens of Oregon voted to legalize medical and recreational marijuana, and it is not the role of the Attorney General to unilaterally undermine the will of Oregon voters on the basis of uncorroborated claims and furtive recommendations made by a task force shielded from public input and scrutiny.

I have a number of questions regarding the content of the task force's recommendations, your justification for not releasing these recommendations, and the timing of your recent actions based on these recommendations, including any actions that relate to DOJ's enforcement of federal marijuana law against states that have legalized medical or recreational marijuana. Please provide an individual response to each of the seven questions below.

1. Does DOJ currently have a plan in place to release the task force's recommendations to the public? If so, please provide a specific date by which the public can expect these recommendations to be released. If not, please provide me with the task force recommendations in whatever form they were provided to your office.
2. What is DOJ's justification for not releasing the policy recommendations of the task force ordered by the president? Please reference relevant DOJ policy in your justification.
3. When did you receive recommendations from the task force? Given your statement that you have been receiving these recommendations on a "rolling basis," please include specific dates of all reports provided to your office by the task force.
4. Did each subcommittee of the task force provide recommendations to your office? If not, please identify the subcommittees that did and did not provide recommendations.
5. Did the task force's marijuana subcommittee provide recommendations to your office? If so, please ensure these subcommittee recommendations are identified in your responses.
6. What actions have you taken to implement recommendations of the task force, and when did you take these actions? Please provide specific dates of particular actions and identify which recommendations those particular actions were based upon.
7. Which specific actions, if any, have you taken based on recommendations of the task force's marijuana subcommittee?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator