

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION,
AND FORESTRY

SMALL BUSINESS AND
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

February 12, 2025

Kashyap Patel
c/o Office of Legislative Affairs
U.S. Department of Justice
Main Justice Building, Room 1137
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Mr. Patel:

As the Senate considers your nomination to be the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, we write to express our grave concerns regarding your work on behalf of, and financial ties to, entities tied to foreign governments, including adversaries, that disqualify you from leading the nation's premier law enforcement and counterintelligence agency.

Beginning in April 2024 until just last month, you provided unspecified consulting services to a Cayman Islands-based holding company, "Elite Depot Limited," for which you received millions of dollars in stock. Elite Depot Ltd. is the parent company of Shein, a Chinese fast fashion company with backing from the People's Republic of China (PRC) that has drawn bipartisan criticism for its use of forced labor in China, including persecuted ethnic minorities and children. Continuing to profit from forced labor by refusing to divest your financial interest in this company demonstrates a callous disregard for forced labor victims and calls into question your judgment and ability to impartially lead the FBI's efforts to combat the scourge of human trafficking and the PRC's foreign influence activities.

In your ethics agreement, which is required for your nomination to proceed, you stated that you terminated your consulting position with Elite Depot Ltd. on January 1, 2025.¹ However, you acknowledged that you intend to retain Elite Depot, Ltd. unvested restricted stock valued between \$1,000,001 and \$5,000,000, which conveniently began vesting on February 1, 2025, two days after your confirmation hearing.²

During your confirmation hearing, you vowed to make combatting human trafficking a top priority, stating: "[I]f I'm confirmed, it will be one of the top priorities to make sure [human

¹ Letter from Kashyap Patel to Jolene A. Lauria, Designated Agency Ethics Official, U.S. Department of Justice (Jan. 28, 2025),

[https://extapps2.oge.gov/201/Presiden.nsf/PAS+Index/730D7A12BBF6654785258C240032196E/\\$FILE/Patel%2C%20Kashyap%20%20finalEA.pdf](https://extapps2.oge.gov/201/Presiden.nsf/PAS+Index/730D7A12BBF6654785258C240032196E/$FILE/Patel%2C%20Kashyap%20%20finalEA.pdf).

² *Id.*; U.S. Office of Gov't Ethics, *Public Financial Disclosure Report of Kashyap Patel* (Jan. 30 2025), <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/25509708-kash-patel-financial-disclosure/>.

trafficking] doesn't happen in this country.”³ You further acknowledged in written questions that you previously attacked LeBron James and Jerry Jones on social media for profiting from “CCP slave labor and chinese [sic] genocide,” a galling display of hypocrisy given your sweetheart deal with Elite Depot Ltd.⁴

Human trafficking and the exploitation of children are terrible crimes, and it is deeply troubling that you consulted for, and received millions of dollars from, Shein's parent company, even after Shein admitted to using child labor in its supply chain in its 2023 sustainability report.⁵

Indeed, Shein's troubling forced labor practices are not a secret. In addition to the company's own disclosures, lawmakers of both parties have publicly criticized Shein for its use of forced labor, including child labor. In April 2023, the bipartisan U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission issued a report finding that Shein appears to be sourcing goods in violation of the *Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act*.⁶ In May 2023, a bipartisan group of 22 Members of the House of Representatives wrote a letter to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) noting “credible allegations of the company's use of underpaid and forced labor in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region”⁷ and asking that the SEC require that Shein certify that its products made in China do not utilize forced Uyghur labor.

In an April 2024 letter to then-Secretary Mayorkas urging the Department of Homeland Security to investigate Shein, then-Senator Marco Rubio noted that Shein had “exploded in popularity due to their ultra-low prices, which are a result of a combination of intellectual property theft, trade exploitation, strong backing from the [Chinese Communist Party], and, allegedly, the use of forced labor” and noted that “private firms and journalists have unearthed compelling evidence that [Shein is] facilitating the entry of goods made with Uyghur forced labor.”⁸ In a June 2024 letter to United Kingdom Chancellor Jeremy Hunt opposing the listing of Shein on the London Stock Exchange, Rubio noted that “slave labor, sweatshops, and trade tricks are the dirty secrets behind SHEIN's success.”⁹ Senator Cassidy, joined by Senators Whitehouse and Warren, sent a letter to the CEO of Shein in February 2023, noting in part that “we are concerned that American consumers may be inadvertently purchasing apparel made in-part with cotton grown, picked, and

³ *Hearing on the nomination of Kashyap Pramod Patel to be the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Before the S. Comm. On the Judiciary*, 119th Cong. (Jan. 30, 2025) (statements of Kashyap Patel).

⁴ Responses to written questions from Senator Dick Durbin, question 6, *Nomination of Kashyap Patel to be Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation*, S. Comm. on the Judiciary, 119th Cong. (Jan. 30, 2025).

⁵ Shein, *2023 Sustainability and Social Impact Report*, <https://www.sheingroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/FINAL-SHEIN-2023-Sustainability-and-Social-Impact-Report.pdf.pdf>.

⁶ U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *Shein, Temu, and Chinese e-Commerce: Data Risks, Sourcing Violations, and Trade Loopholes* (Apr. 14, 2023), https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/2023-04/Issue_Brief-Shein_Temu_and_Chinese_E-Commerce.pdf.

⁷ Letter from Members of Congress to Securities and Exchange Commission Chair Gary Gensler (May 1, 2023), <https://johnrose.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/johnrose.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/rosewextonlettersec-shein.pdf>.

⁸ Letter from Senator Marco Rubio to Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, Alejandro Mayorkas (Apr. 16, 2024), <https://www.rubio.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/04.16.24-Rubio-Letter-to-DHS-re-Adding-Shein-and-Temu-to-the-UFLPA-Entity-List.pdf>.

⁹ Letter from Senator Marco Rubio to Chancellor of the Exchequer Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt (June 10, 2024), <https://www.rubio.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/06.10.24-Rubio-Letter-Re-SHEIN.pdf>.

processed using forced labor.”¹⁰ The Trump Administration is reportedly considering adding Shein to the Department of Homeland Security’s forced labor list.¹¹

In light of the company’s widely documented use of forced labor and self-reported instances of child labor exploitation, your response to Ranking Member Durbin’s question for the record concerning your holdings in Elite Depot Ltd. is alarming. You should have condemned Elite Depot’s use of forced labor, committed to divesting your stock in the company, and committed to fully recusing yourself from any matters involving Elite Depot Ltd. or its subsidiaries or their interests, if confirmed.

Instead, you prioritized your financial windfall. You stated that you had been advised by the Office of Government Ethics that “it is not necessary at this time for me to divest my interests in Elite Depot, Ltd.” and that you have “agreed to not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter that to my knowledge has a direct and predictable effect on the financial interests of Elite Depot, Ltd., for as long as I own it, unless I first obtain a written waiver... or qualify for a regulatory exemption.”¹²

Refusing to divest your millions of dollars in holdings in a company backed by the Chinese Communist Party and which relies on forced labor, and offering flimsy recusal commitments that could enable you to participate in FBI matters related to the company if you are confirmed, is a wholly inadequate response for a nominee seeking to lead the agency charged with vigorously and impartially enforcing human trafficking laws and countering China’s unlawful foreign influence activities. You owe Congress and the American people an explanation and accounting of your work for, and continued financial stake in, Elite Depot Ltd. given their well-known human trafficking record and ties to the PRC.

This is not an isolated instance. You have other foreign entanglements that raise concerns. The specific nature of your work for the government of Qatar, which you state ended in November 2024 and for which you did not register under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), and the amount of money that Qatar paid you, remains undisclosed.¹³ The payments you received from a known Russia-linked propagandist and The Czechoslovak Group, a foreign arms conglomerate which Vice President JD Vance publicly condemned for threatening national security and having “ties to the inner circle of Russian President Vladimir Putin,” are equally, if

¹⁰ Letter from Senators Bill Cassidy, Sheldon Whitehouse and Elizabeth Warren to Shein CEO Yagntian Xu (Feb. 9, 2023), <https://www.cassidy.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/media/doc/Letter%20to%20Shein%20on%20Forced%20Labor%20FINAL.pdf>.

¹¹ Reuters, *Trump administration considers adding Shein, Temu to 'forced labor' list, Semafor reports* (Feb. 5, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/trump-administration-considers-adding-shein-temu-forced-labor-list-semafor-2025-02-05/>.

¹² Questions for the Record, *The Nomination of the Honorable Kashyap Patel to be Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation*, Before the S. Comm. On the Judiciary, 119th Cong. (Jan. 30, 2025), https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-01-30_-_qfr_responses_-_patel.pdf.

¹³ Letter from Kashyap Patel to Jolene A. Lauria, Designated Agency Ethics Official, U.S. Department of Justice (Jan. 28, 2025), [https://extapps2.oge.gov/201/Presiden.nsf/PAS+Index/730D7A12BBF6654785258C240032196E/\\$FILE/Patel%2C%20Kashyap%20%20finalEA.pdf](https://extapps2.oge.gov/201/Presiden.nsf/PAS+Index/730D7A12BBF6654785258C240032196E/$FILE/Patel%2C%20Kashyap%20%20finalEA.pdf).

not more, concerning.¹⁴ While being more forthcoming about your foreign business dealings will not absolve you of responsibility for these actions, the Senate, in fulfilling its advice and consent role on nominations, requires a full and complete account of your activities for these foreign actors.

To that end, please answer the below questions prior to the Committee's vote on your nomination on **Thursday, February 13, 2025**.

1. What was the exact nature and scope of your work for Elite Depot Ltd.? How many hours of work did you complete and what services or deliverables did you provide?
2. Who hired you, to whom did you report, and who at Elite Depot Ltd. did you communicate or work with?
3. Did you work or communicate with or for anyone affiliated with Shein? If yes, please provide a detailed description of this work.
4. Did you lobby anyone on Elite Depot Ltd. or Shein's behalf, including any American officials or political figures?
5. Did you raise concerns with anyone at either Elite Depot Ltd. or Shein regarding their troubling business practices or use of forced labor either prior to or during the period you performed consulting services for Elite Depot Ltd.? If yes, please provide written documentation that you raised such concerns.
6. Did you receive any forms of compensation for your services other than stock? Please describe the structure of your compensation agreement, including whether you were compensated based on hours worked or services provided.
7. What was the exact nature and scope of your work for the government of Qatar, and how much were you compensated? Why did you not register under FARA?
8. What was the exact nature and scope of your work for all entities identified as having ties or financial links to Russia, and how much were you compensated?

We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



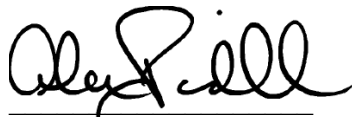
Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

¹⁴ PBS News, *Patel's roster of foreign clients draws scrutiny over conflicting interests with the FBI* (Feb. 8, 2025), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/patels-roster-of-foreign-clients-draws-scrutiny-over-conflicting-interests-with-the-fbi>.