

# United States Senate

April 20, 2020

COMMITTEES  
APPROPRIATIONS  
CHAIRMAN OF  
FINANCIAL SERVICES  
GENERAL GOVERNMENT  
BANKING, HOUSING, AND  
URBAN AFFAIRS  
BUDGET  
JUDICIARY  
SMALL BUSINESS AND  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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

Dear Attorney General Barr:

Every corner of the United States has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and its devastating impact. As the chief law enforcement official, I recognize the unprecedented challenges you are facing in weighing the competing interests of keeping our communities safe while ensuring the continued administration of justice.

On March 26, 2020, you directed the Federal Bureau of Prisons to release certain non-violent offenders who are at a higher risk of contracting and succumbing to COVID-19. This authority was granted to you via emergency legislation passed by Congress to reduce the risk of infection to older and chronically ill federal inmates. However, when making decisions about who to release early, it is imperative the Federal Bureau of Prisons strongly considers the financial, emotional and physical devastation that some inmates have caused by their crimes.

Robert Allen Stanford was convicted in 2012 of thirteen felony counts and sentenced to 110 years in federal prison for his crimes. Stanford orchestrated an investment-fraud scheme, second only to that of Bernie Madoff's in size, which involved nearly \$8 billion and 18,000 victims, including at least 900 Louisianans. Stanford lived lavishly by preying on the vulnerabilities of Americans who trusted him with every cent of their savings, many experiencing financial ruin when the scam fell apart. To this day, more than a dozen lawsuits are pending against Stanford by investors seeking pennies on the dollar from their initial investments.

Stanford, at seventy years old, may be among the prison population considered for early release under your directive. Madoff, who is eighty-one years old and suffers from health issues, has already requested early release due to COVID-19, and I am concerned that it is only a matter of time before Stanford does as well. Releasing either of these individuals, or anyone similarly situated, would be an affront to those affected by their evil schemes, and a complete failure in the administration of justice.

Our efforts should be focused on protecting those who protected us; our parents, grandparents, and military veterans who led crime-free lives. Criminals such as Stanford and Madoff who preyed on the elderly should be the last ones to benefit from the change in circumstances COVID-19 has caused.

The safety of Americans is always our top priority. I respectfully urge you to deny any request for early release made by Robert Allen Stanford, Bernie Madoff, and others who chose to devastate innocent Americans with their fraudulent schemes. Additionally, I request that you take the additional steps to publish the following information on the Department of Justice website for every inmate who is released under these new orders: (1) name, (2) last known address, (3) prison from which they were released, (4) age, and (5) offense. In an effort to maximize public safety during these unprecedented circumstances, I also request that you encourage all states' Attorneys General to publish the same information for state prisoners who are released because of COVID-19.

Thank you for your service to our country and your commitment to protecting our communities during this difficult time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Kennedy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

John Kennedy  
United States Senator