

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Merrick Garland
Attorney General
Department of Justice
950 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20530

February 1, 2024

Dear Attorney General Garland,

We write to urge the Department of Justice (DOJ) to prioritize its investigation into the Fulton County Jail in Atlanta, Georgia, and to request a briefing on the status of this and other investigations into jail and prison conditions.

On July 13, 2023, the DOJ announced that it had opened a civil investigation into conditions at the Fulton County Jail in Georgia and whether they violated the rights of people who are incarcerated.¹ We were glad to see the DOJ take this step following reports of egregious conditions at the Fulton County Jail. This includes but not is limited to the tragic death of Lashawn Thompson, who was found unresponsive and covered in bed bugs in a cell in September 2022.²

Since the investigation began, however, deaths at Fulton County Jail have continued. In January 2024, Michael Anthony Holland, 36, was found unresponsive in his cell.³ He had been held on bond since May 4, 2023.⁴ His is at least the seventh death since the DOJ's investigation began, including five deaths in the month of August alone.⁵ In total, ten people died at the Fulton County Jail in 2023.⁶

In light of these tragic and alarming events, we urge the DOJ to prioritize its investigation into the Fulton County Jail and devote any resources necessary to protect the rights of individuals in confinement. We also ask for a briefing on the status of the DOJ's investigation into conditions at the Fulton County Jail and at correctional institutions nationally. Our offices stand ready to assist in any way.

¹ Press Release, United States Department of Justice, *Justice Department Announces Investigation into Conditions in Fulton County, Georgia Jail* (Jul. 13, 2023), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-announces-investigation-conditions-fulton-county-georgia-jail>.

² Jim Gaines, *Fulton County Settles with Family of Jail Inmate Who Died Covered in Bed Bugs*, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* (Aug. 2, 2023), <https://www.ajc.com/news/fulton-county-settles-with-lashawn-thompsons-family/2QMPGLLL6JG6LFYMXZ57WMJH44>.

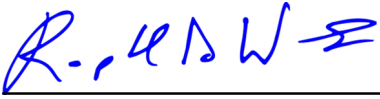
³ *Man Dies After He Was Found Unresponsive in Cell at Problem-Plagued Jail in Atlanta*, *Associated Press* (Jan. 10, 2024), <https://apnews.com/article/fulton-county-jail-inmate-death-a1f26e91175b64d47e34f73468b80bf5>.

⁴ *Id.*

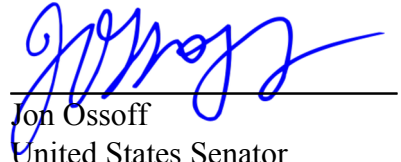
⁵ Data provided by the American Civil Liberties Union of Georgia.

⁶ *Fulton County Jail Inmate Dies After Being Found Unresponsive in Cell*, *Atlanta News First* (Jan. 10, 2024), <https://www.atlantaneWSfirst.com/2024/01/10/fulton-county-jail-inmate-dies-after-being-found-unresponsive-cell>.

Sincerely,



Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



Jon Ossoff
United States Senator



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress